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ABSTRACT

Results from the third national writing assessment of 13-year-old students conducted in 1979 by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) are presented in this volume. Chapter one provides highlights of the results of the test assessment which indicate a general decline in the writing performance of 13-year-old students. Chapter two gives an overview of the NAEP assessments, a discussion of the populations assessed, a description of the written exercises, and descriptions of the methods of scoring: holistic, primary trait, analysis of rhetorical effectiveness, and analysis of syntax and mechanics. Chapter three provides an indepth discussion of the results, and chapter four gives an overview of the writing of 9-year-old, 13-year-old, and 17-year-old students. Chapter five offers some observations about writing in the United States and suggests implications of the results of the assessment for instruction. Appendixes include exercises, documentation, scoring guides, and sample papers: guidelines for syntax and mechanics analysis; group results and exercises evaluated for primary trait and cohesion; error frequencies for good and poor papers and selected groups; and the background questionnaire and group responses to background and attitude questions. (MKM)

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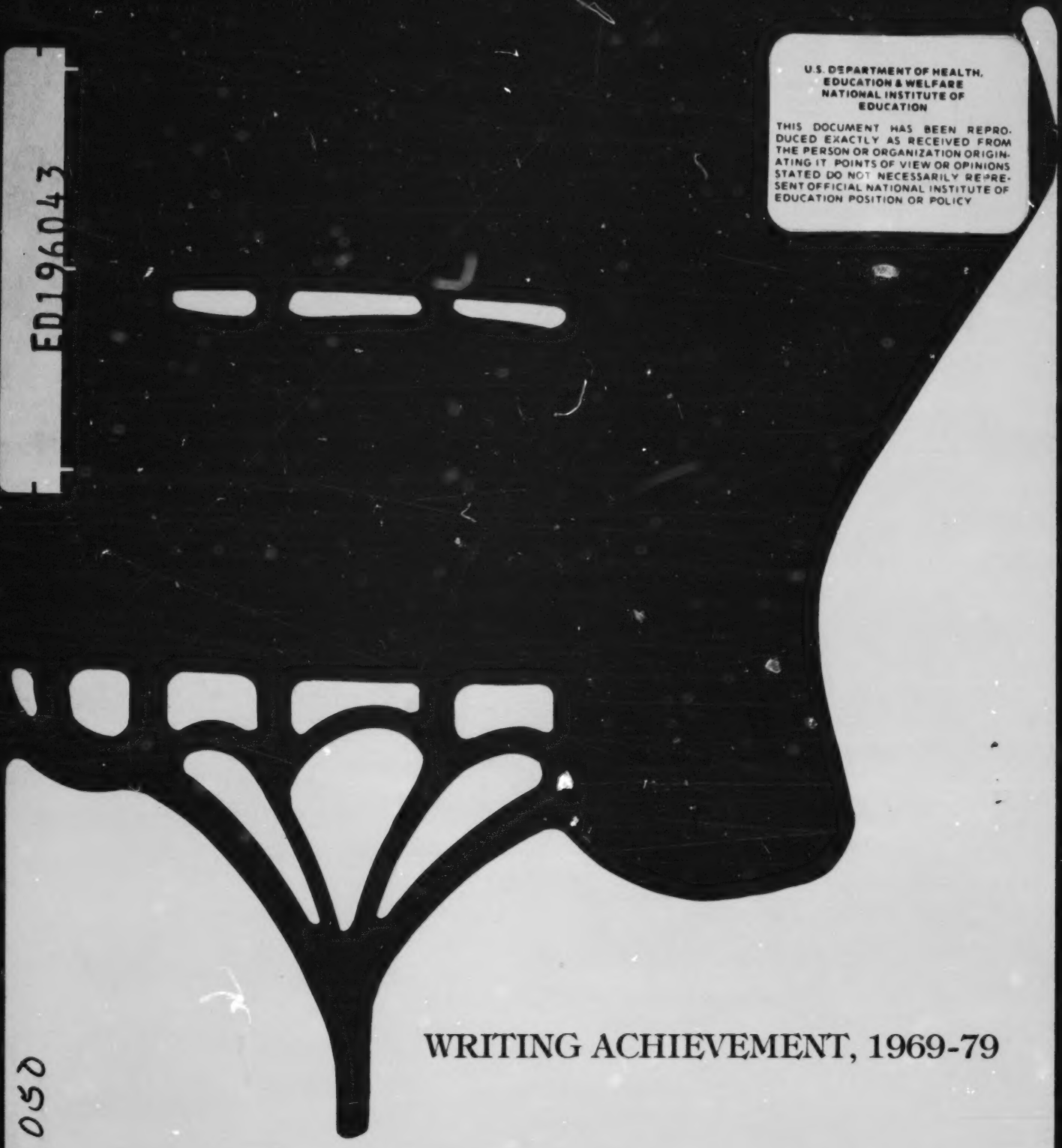

WRITING ACHIEVEMENT, 1969-79

CS206050

Results From the Third National Writing Assessment

Volume II - 13-Year-Olds

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS
Education Commission of the States

Bob Graham, Governor of Florida, Chairperson, Education Commission of the States
Robert C. Andringa, Executive Director, Education Commission of the States
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WRITING ACHIEVEMENT, 1969-79:

Results From the Third National Writing Assessment

Volume II—13-Year-Olds

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FOREWORD

When the U.S. Office of Education was chartered in 1867, one charge to its commissioners was to determine the nation's progress in education. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was initiated a century later to address, in a systematic way, that charge.

Since 1969, the National Assessment has gathered information about levels of educational achievement across the country and reported its findings to the nation. It has surveyed the attainments of 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and sometimes adults in art, career and occupational development, citizenship, literature, mathematics, music, reading, science, social studies and writing. All areas have been periodically reassessed in order to detect any important changes. To date, National Assessment has interviewed and tested more than 900,000 young Americans.

Learning-area assessments evolve from a consensus process. Each assessment is the product of several years of work by a great many educators, scholars and lay persons from all over the nation. Initially, these people design objectives for each subject area, proposing general goals they feel Americans should be achieving in the course of their education. After careful reviews, these objectives are given to exercise (item) writers, whose task it is to create measurement instruments appropriate to the objectives.

When the exercises have passed extensive reviews by subject-matter specialists, measurement experts and lay persons, they are administered to probability samples. The people who compose these samples are chosen in such a way that the results of their assessment can be generalized to an entire national population. That is, on the basis of the performance of about 2,500 9-year-olds on a given exercise, we can make generalizations about the probable performance of all 9-year-olds in the nation.

After assessment data have been collected, scored and analyzed, the National Assessment publishes reports and disseminates the results as widely as possible. Not all exercises are released for publication. Because NAEP will readminister some of the same exercises in the future to determine whether the performance level of Americans has increased, remained stable or decreased, it is essential that they not be released in order to preserve the integrity of the study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many organizations and individuals have made substantial contributions to the writing assessments. Not the least of those to be gratefully acknowledged are the administrators, teachers and students who cooperated so generously during the collection of the data.

Special acknowledgement must go to the many writing educators and specialists who provided their expertise in the development, review and selection of the assessment objectives and exercises. Particular thanks are given to Carl Klaus and Richard Lloyd-Jones, both of the University of Iowa, for providing leadership in the development of primary trait exercises and scoring guides; to John Mellon, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, for providing leadership in the development of the sentence combining exercises and the mechanics and syntax scoring guides; to Charles Cooper, University of California at San Diego, for providing leadership in the development of the cohesion scoring guides; and to Paul Diehl, University of Iowa, for providing special assistance in all areas.

Administration of the writing assessment was conducted by the Research Triangle Institute, Raleigh, North Carolina. Scoring and processing were carried out by the Measurement Research Center (now Westinghouse DataScore Systems), Iowa City, Iowa. The scoring staff at Westinghouse DataScore Systems—in particular, Sue Worthen, Donna Benson and Dan Duse—deserve special mention for their excellent work supervising the primary trait, cohesion, mechanics and syntax scoring, as does Wendy Littlefair for her consulting work with the syntax and mechanics scoring. Edward White of the University of California at San Bernardino and his holistic scoring staff also deserve thanks for their work.

Within the National Assessment staff, special thanks must go to Ina Mullis, who has been coordinator of the last two assessments, the designer of the data analysis, the scoring monitor and a tireless reviewer of these reports. Jim Damon must be thanked for his data processing support; Jan Pearson and Ava Powell for their technical support; Marci Reser and Carmen Nieves for their production support. Generously assisted by all of the above, Rexford Brown wrote the report.

Roy H. Forbes
Director

CHAPTER 1
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RESULTS

Changes in the writing of 13-year-olds were assessed with four writing exercises, one of which was evaluated holistically, one of which was evaluated for both cohesion and rhetorical effectiveness (primary trait evaluation) and two of which were evaluated for rhetorical effectiveness alone. A fifth exercise provides further baseline information. In addition, two of the essays were subjected to a detailed analysis of syntactic and mechanical features, and students answered a number of questions about their writing habits and attitudes. Exhibit 1-1 displays national percentages of performance for the writing tasks in each assessment. Details of the assessments, of holistic, primary trait and cohesion scoring, and of the syntax and mechanics analyses appear in Chapter 2 and in the appendixes. Further results appear in Chapters 3 and 4, and an interpretive discussion of the results appears in Chapter 5.

Some major findings:

- Holistic evaluation reveals that between 1969 and 1978 there was a decline in the quality of the descriptive essays written for the assessment. Most of the decline took place between 1969 and 1973; little changed during the late seventies.

- Rhetorical skill (measured by primary trait evaluation) on an expressive task requiring creation of a mood ("Rainy Day") dropped slightly (4%) over the decade. Nevertheless, about two-thirds of the students demonstrated at least minimal skill in each assessment.

- Rhetorical skill in expressing value and feeling remained at the same level for another essay ("Loss"). In both 1973 and 1978, about half the students showed at least minimal ability and 20% wrote good papers.

- There was a decline in the percentage of students successfully writing a persuasive letter ("Principal Letter"). Although 69% were able to do a marginal job in 1973, the proportion dropped to 64% in 1978. The proportion of letters judged competent or better dropped from 28% to 20%.

- Eighty percent of the 13-year-olds wrote successful letters to a mail order firm.

- The percentage of papers displaying good cohesion was low in 1969 and even lower in 1978. Twenty-nine percent of the papers showed good cohesion in 1969; by 1973, the percentage had dropped to 19%, and in 1978 it was 21%.

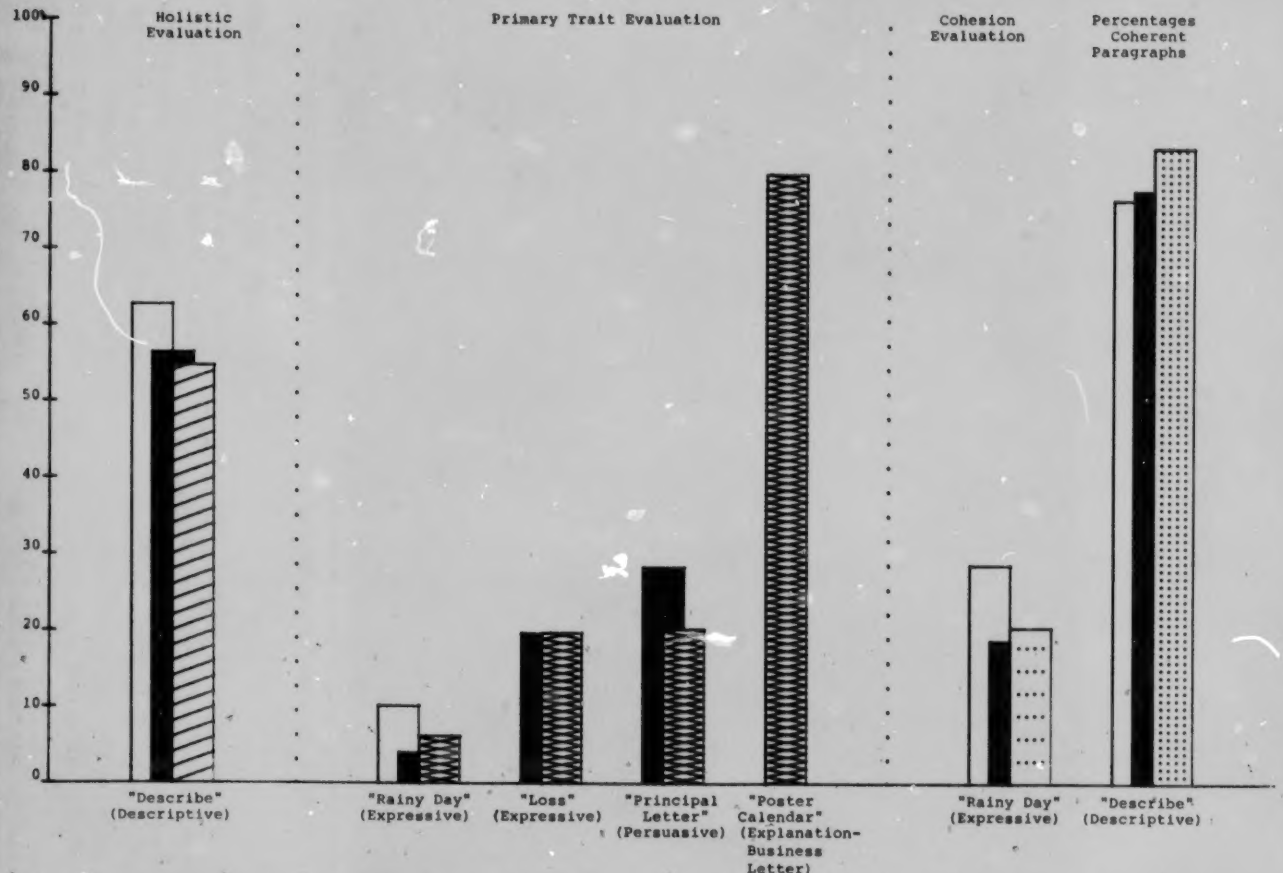
- Females wrote substantially more successful papers than males in each assessment.

- Black 13-year-olds improved on some tasks and did not decline as fast as the nation on others, with the result that they narrowed, and in some cases, erased any significant difference between their performance as a group and the national performance.

- Although the disadvantaged-urban group gained ground, relative to the nation, by not declining in the area of cohesion, it did not make similar gains in rhetorical skills. In each assessment this group of students wrote significantly fewer acceptable papers than the nation as a whole, and from assessment to assessment the group followed the national trend.

- Basically, proportions of mechanical errors in the papers did not change between 1969 and 1978.

EXHIBIT 1–1. National Percentages of Good* Papers, Age 13, 1969, 1973, 1978



*Percentages shown for holistic, primary trait and cohesion evaluations are for papers rated 3 and 4 on a 4-point scale.

- A majority of the students displayed a general grasp of writing conventions, but about one-fifth of the 13-year-olds appeared to have massive problems with written language.

- One-third of the 13-year-olds reported having been assigned only one or no writing tasks during the six weeks prior to the assessment. Two-thirds reported being assigned three or fewer papers.

- Three-quarters of the students reported that writing instruction takes up to one-third or less of their class time. The better writers indicated that they had had more writing instruction than had the poorer writers.

- More students said they never enjoy writing in school (26%) than said they usually enjoy it (20%).

- Very few students—3%—appeared to be engaging in all of the following activities: pre-writing, creating multiple drafts, receiving written and oral feedback from their teachers and working to improve their papers after they are returned.

CHAPTER 2
BACKGROUND

A. Overview

This report is based upon three national assessments of writing, the first in 1969-70, the second in 1973-74 and the third in 1978-79. Some writing tasks were included in all three assessments, permitting analysis of changes in student writing at three points between 1969 and 1978. Other writing tasks were included in the last two assessments, permitting analysis of changes during the last half of the seventies.

The results reported in this volume are not based upon the writing of the same 13-year-olds over the nine-year period. Rather, they are based upon three different assessments. Thirteen-year-olds attending school were first assessed in the fall of 1969. Four years later, another national sample of 13-year-olds was assessed, and five years after that yet another sample was assessed. Since each sample represented the national population of 13-year-olds, the assessments can reveal whether the writing skills of that age group are changing and in what respects. The assessment was not administered to intact classrooms; rather, it was given to a randomly selected group of 13-year-olds who may or may not be taking the same English courses.

B. Populations Assessed

The target population for each of the three assessments consisted of 13-year-olds attending public or private schools. Details of the sampling design and procedures are explained in NAEP Report 10-W-40, *Procedural Handbook: 1978-79 Writing Assessment* (1980), and numerous other Assessment reports and monographs. Here it should be sufficient to say that each assessment employed a stratified, multistage probability sample design. About 2,000-2,800 responses were collected for any given writing task. Some of the figures given in this report are based on an analysis of all 2,000-2,800 responses to a particular exercise, and some are based upon national subsamples of 395-680 papers—a number sufficiently large to permit generalizations about an entire age group, but not large enough to permit statements about special subpopulations such as rural youngsters. To obtain the representative subsamples of descriptive and expressive papers, scientific probability subsamples were drawn from the total National Assessment samples. Small percentages (1%-9%) of these subsamples were nonrateable papers that were excluded from the analysis. The sample sizes used for analyses in this volume appear in Table 2-1, below, and in parentheses (e.g., n = 395) on each table in the text.

TABLE 2-1. Sample Sizes for Results Presented in This Volume

Essay	Analysis	No. in Sample		
		1969	1973	1978
"Describe" (description)	Holistic scoring	395	420	536
	Paragraph coherence	395	420	536
	Syntax and mechanics	395	420	536
"Rainy Day" (expression)	Primary trait scoring	2,408	2,621	2,804
	Cohesion	2,408	2,621	2,804
	Syntax and mechanics	589	630	680
"Loss" (expression)	Primary trait scoring		2,607	2,775
"Principal Letter" (persuasion)	Primary trait scoring		2,552	2,793
"Poster Calendar" (explanation-business letter)	Primary trait scoring			2,776
Background questions				29,430

Whenever analysis is based upon full samples of 2,000-2,800, we can report results for a number of population groups defined by sex, race, region of the country, parental education, type of community and grade in school. These are defined in Table 2-2. The national subsamples of "Rainy Day" permit reporting for only sex and race; the subsamples of "Describe," only sex.

TABLE 2-2. Definitions of Subgroups

Sex	Results are presented for males and females.
Race	Results are presented for black students and white students. Data for Hispanic students are not reported because samples sizes for individual items are too small.
Region	Results are presented for the Northeastern, Southeastern, Central and Western regions shown on the following map.

Parental education	Results are presented for three levels of parental education: (1) those whose parents did not graduate from high school, (2) those who have at least one parent who graduated from high school and (3) those who have at least one parent who has had some post high school education.
Type of community	Three extreme community types of special interest are defined by an occupational profile of the area served by a school, as well as by the size of the community in which the school is located. *Advantaged urban* (high metro). Students in this group attend schools in or around cities having a population greater than 200,000 and where a high proportion of the residents are in professional or managerial employment. *Disadvantaged urban* (low metro). Students in this group attend schools in or around cities having a population greater than 200,000 and where a relatively high proportion of the residents are on welfare or not regularly employed. *Rural.* Students in this group attend schools in areas with a population under 10,000 and where many of the residents are farmers or farm workers. This is the only reporting category that excludes a large number of respondents. About two-thirds do not fall into the classifications listed above. Results for the remaining two-thirds are not reported, since their performance is similar to that of the nation.
Grade in school	Results are presented for 13-year-olds in grades 7 (25%) and 8 (73%).

In reporting group data, the following abbreviations have been used on tables and graphs:

N	= Nation
M	= Males
F	= Females
B	= Blacks
W	= Whites
SE	= Southeast
NE	= Northeast
C	= Central
W	= West
NGH	= Parents did not graduate from high school
GHS	= At least one parent graduated from high school
PHS	= At least one parent with post high school education
AU	= Advantaged urban (high metro)
DU	= Disadvantaged urban (low metro)
R	= Rural
7	= 7th grade
8	= 8th grade

C. The Writing Exercises, Scoring Approaches and Descriptive Analyses

Details of NAEP exercise development procedures appear in NAEP Report 10-W-40, *Procedural Handbook: 1978-79 Writing Assessment* (1980). Complete documentation of all exercises released after the third assessment of writing, including scoring guides and sample responses, is contained in Report 10-W-25, *The Third Assessment of Writing: 1978-79 Writing Released Exercise Set* (1980).

The writing exercises were created by experienced writing educators. Then they were field tested, refined and reviewed carefully before being used. Each assessment contained exercises assessing several kinds of discourse on the grounds that students may be proficient in some kinds of writing but not in others. Thus, we have gathered information about expressive writing, descriptive or explanatory writing and persuasive writing. Although some of the same skills are involved in each kind of writing, there are challenges and strategies unique to each, as the results amply illustrate. Although an assessment that includes many kinds of writing may be somewhat confusing, it is preferable to an assessment that relies upon a single kind of writing.

Several types of scoring and analysis went into the creation of the data in this report. Each is briefly described below and illustrated in the text and appendixes. Readers desiring more information about these procedures should consult the handbook and exercise set cited above, as well as Mullis (1980), Mullis and Mellon (1980), and Brown (1979), which also cite additional references. For each procedure, raters scored a random mixture of papers collected from the different assessments. Each kind of scoring was done by a different group of scorers.

Holistic Scoring

When readers holistically score papers, they do not focus upon particular aspects of a paper such as mechanics or ideas or organization. Rather, they concentrate upon forming an *overall* impression of each paper relative to the other papers they have read. Their primary task is to rank order the papers from best to worst, not to identify errors or to specify writing problems.

The holistic scoring reported in this volume involved several steps. First, the table leaders—all of whom were experienced holistic readers—surveyed the pool of papers from all three assessments and selected examples of papers representing four levels of quality. Then, they developed guidelines describing each level of quality and how to distinguish between top-half and bottom-half papers. The scoring session began with some discussion of the characteristics of the anchor papers and guidelines, and then included several practice scorings of other papers to refine the scoring scale description and iron out discrepancies among readers. When all readers were comfortable with the guidelines (see Appendix A), they scored papers for an hour, after which they discussed more anchor papers. Throughout the subsequent scoring there were periodic discussions of papers to insure that readers continued to hold to the same standards.

Reliability of scoring was checked by having a random 10% of the papers read by pairs of readers who were matched to detect potential

discrepancies. The readers agreed on 79% of the papers.

Papers from all three assessments were holistically scored at the same scoring session to make sure that all were evaluated by the same standards.

The Primary Trait Scoring System (PTS)

The primary trait approach to essay evaluation involves isolating an important writing skill, developing a task to measure it and articulating four levels of proficiency. When a reader is rating papers for PTS, he or she is rating each paper against criteria spelled out in the scoring guide instead of rating each paper in terms of the entire pool of papers. Thus, whereas a holistic scoring tends to distribute a pool of papers over a "bell shaped curve," a PTS scoring will only distribute papers according to their relationship to the scoring criteria. If none of the papers meet the criteria for the highest rating, then so be it; the object is to *describe* the papers, not rank order them.

Holistic scoring enables one to determine if a group of papers written at one time is better than a group written at another time, but it does not provide much specific information about how the two groups differ. Primary trait scoring provides specific information about particular rhetorical aspects of papers, but does not provide information about overall quality. Thus, it is useful to do both kinds of evaluation whenever possible.

Training for PTS scoring involves thorough discussion of the writing assignment, scoring guide and sample papers. If the assignment has been constructed to elicit evidence of proficiency in a particular writing skill, it should explicitly establish the writing situation, specifying the purpose of the communication, the audience and what must be accomplished. The instructions should unambiguously tell the writer what is required, and the scoring guide should unambiguously define four levels of proficiency in the primary skill being assessed. Generally, level "1" indicates no evidence of the skill; level "2," marginal evidence; level "3," solid performance; and level "4," very good performance. Scorers discuss each level and study papers exemplifying each until everyone feels comfortable with the system. Then scoring commences, with periodic discussion of troublesome papers. All papers were rated independently by two scorers, with disagreements being reconciled by a third scorer. Agreement between the first two scorers ranged from 91% to 94% for the sets of papers included in this report.

Some PTS exercises require readers to look for secondary aspects of the papers as well. For instance, the primary focus of the "Poster Calendar" exercise is upon ability to formulate a request situation clearly enough to order something through the mail. However, scorers also categorized such secondary matters as whether or not the letters contained appropriate greetings.

Scoring guides for all PTS exercises appear in Appendix A.

Cohesion

The term cohesion refers in general to the many ways words and ideas are linked together in writing to create a sense of wholeness and coherence. The cohesion scoring (see guide, Appendix A) required readers to sort papers into groups representing four degrees of cohesiveness. Papers in the lowest group (level 1) display no or few connections between sentences and are loosely structured. Papers in the next group (level 2) display attempts to tie ideas together here or there but do not show any unifying structure. Cohesive papers (level 3) display gathering and ordering of details and ideas, and fully coherent papers (level 4) display a number of strategies and devices that bind the ideas and feelings expressed into a unified whole.

Readers discussed the scoring criteria, sample papers and cohesive ties and strategies before undertaking the scoring. Scoring proceded very much like the scoring for PTS, with periodic checks for consistency and reliability. Also, as with the PTS evaluations, each paper was rated by at least two readers. The percent of agreement was 91% to 94% for each of the three sets of papers.

Syntax and Mechanics

In addition to being rated for quality, the

"Rainy Day" and "Describe" papers were also analyzed in terms of their syntactic and "mechanical" features. Syntax refers to the ways in which words are put together to form phrases, clauses and sentences. Mechanics refers to the ways in which writers handle basic conventions of writing such as punctuation, spelling or word choice. A syntactic analysis involves breaking each paper up into its "T-units" (a T-unit is a main clause with all its attendant modifying words, phrases and dependent clauses) and examining the ways in which writers embed information in T-units and join T-units together. A mechanics analysis involves classifying the kinds of errors writers make in sentence use, punctuation, spelling, and so forth.

Both kinds of analysis were done by experienced English teachers thoroughly trained in grammar, usage and linguistics. After the papers had been coded by two to four scorers for sentence types, T-units, embedding, modification, conjoining, mechanics errors and the like, the coded essays were keypunched and the results tabulated to produce the results presented in this report.

Outlines listing the syntactic features analyzed in this report appear in Appendix B. More complete information is also available in Mullis and Mellon (1980).

D. The Analysis and Data Presentation

National Assessment reports the performance of groups of students, not individuals. For primary trait and cohesion ratings, the basic measure of achievement reported is the percentage of papers at each score level or a combination of the best score levels. Increases or decreases in the percentage of good responses between assessments are used to indicate trends in achievement for an age level or a subpopulation of interest.

Tables presenting primary trait results offer percentages for score points 1, 2, 3 and 4, as well as for 2, 3 and 4 combined, 3 and 4 combined, and 0 (nonrateable). The 0 category includes people who did not respond to the exercise, wrote on an altogether different topic or wrote so illegibly their papers could not be scored. Holistic scoring information is presented in terms of percentages of papers at each score point and average performance each assessment year.

For the descriptive information about syntax and mechanics, data are presented to illustrate the range of performance as well as the average performance. Syntax and mechanics tables present means, medians, quartiles and the top deciles. The mean, of course, is an average across all the papers. Quartiles present a more accurate picture of the entire distribution by providing the value of the papers at the 25th percentile (Q1), at the center point (median) and at the 75th percentile (Q3). The top decile (90th percentile) is the value above which 10% of the papers fell. Quartiles and deciles are unrelated to quality judgments; they simply give the values at various points of the distribution of whatever is being counted—adverbial modifications, number of misspellings, or whatever. These tables, then, should help the reader to see the range of the papers—something that averages tend to obscure.

Because the numbers and percentages presented in this report are based upon samples, they are necessarily estimates, not definitive figures. They are, of course, our best estimates; but they are subject to the qualification that a certain amount of measurement and nonmeasurement error creeps into even the best estimates. Thus, for example, the figure 20% is really 20% plus or minus a certain (usually small) margin of error.

National Assessment computes standard errors that estimate the sampling error and other random error associated with the assessment of a specific item. NAEP has adhered to a standard convention whereby differences between statistics are designated as statistically significant at the .05 level of significance. That is, differences are highlighted only if they are at least twice as large as their standard errors. Differences this large would occur by chance in fewer than 5% of all possible replications of the sampling, data collection and scoring procedures for any particular age group or reporting group. If a national figure was 20% and if the standard error of the female percentage was .5 points, 22% would be noted as "significantly" (in the statistical sense) different from 20%, because it is more than twice the standard error away from 20%. But if the percentage for females was

20.5%, it would not be at least twice the standard error away from 20, so it would not be termed a statistically significant difference.

Group differences and change differences are asterisked in this report if they are statistically significant in the sense just described. If, in the appendix tables, a group difference from the national percentage is asterisked, it represents a statistically significant difference at the .05 level. If it is not asterisked, we are less confident that the two numbers differ. The same applies to any change percentage: an asterisk indicates statistically significant change, and no asterisk indicates that there may not be a difference between the figures. It is important, however, to distinguish *statistical* significance from *educational* significance. A difference of 3 or 4 points between group and national performance might be statistically significant but too small to merit serious educational concern. One can also imagine a situation in which many changes are negative but no one of them is statistically significant; it could be that the overall *pattern* of negative changes has educational significance. Readers must decide for themselves how important particular changes or differences are in the real world, for statistical conventions can aid, but not replace, good judgment.

CHAPTER 3
THE WRITING OF 13-YEAR-OLDS

A. How Good Are the Papers?

Five different essays and letters written by 13-year-olds were scored for quality. One of them—a descriptive essay—was scored holistically, along lines explained in Chapter 2. Holistic scoring involves training a group of scorers to read a large sample of essays and order them, in terms of their general quality, from worst to best. The scorers have general guidelines (see Appendix A) and papers exemplifying four levels of quality. They train on the sample papers until they achieve consistency. Then, they read each paper, form a general impression of its overall quality relative to the other papers they have read and assign it a score from 1 to 4. Some papers are read by more than one scorer so that monitors can check reliability.

Responses to the other four writing tasks were scored for their rhetorical effectiveness (the degree to which they met the demands of the situation established by the task). The guidelines for rating responses specify four levels of quality ranging from inadequate to very good. Inadequate papers generally do not address the situation (a situation includes a reason for writing, an audience and an appropriate mode of discourse) or do so only barely or vaguely, whereas adequate papers reflect control of the skills the exercise demands. More detail on this approach, called the primary trait system (PTS), appears in Mullis (1980). The guides that are described in this section and in Appendix A will also clarify the approach. The important thing to keep in mind is that holistic scoring involves judging the paper as a whole, whereas primary trait scoring limits judgments to clearly specified rhetorical aspects of the papers and ignores other features, such as mechanics.

1. Holistic Judgment of a Descriptive Exercise, 1969, 1973, 1978

The National Assessment did not conduct three separate holistic scorings in order to gather the change data described in this chapter. Rather, papers written in all three years were randomly ordered into a single pool and scored in a single session. The scorers did not know in which year any particular paper was written, so they necessarily applied the same criteria to all papers. After the scoring, the ratings were examined to determine whether those papers written in different years were perceived, as a group, to be worse or better than the others.

The assignment appears in Appendix A. Briefly, it asked students to describe something they know about—some familiar place or thing—in such a way that it could be recognized by someone who read the description.

Table 3-1 and Exhibit 3-1 display the percentages of papers at each score point in 1969, 1973 and 1978 and changes in the mean holistic score over the nine-year period.

Between 1969 and 1978 there was a significant decline in the quality of the descriptive essays written by 13-year-olds, most of the decline coming between the first two assessments. What this means is that when readers rated essays written at three different points in time, they perceived the earliest papers, as a group, to be higher in quality than the more recently written papers.

Exhibit 3-1 graphically illustrates what Table 3-1 documents: almost a fourth of the 1969 papers received the highest rating and almost two-thirds

EXHIBIT 3–1. Distributions of Descriptive Papers Across Four Holistic Score Points, Age 13, 1969, 1973, 1978

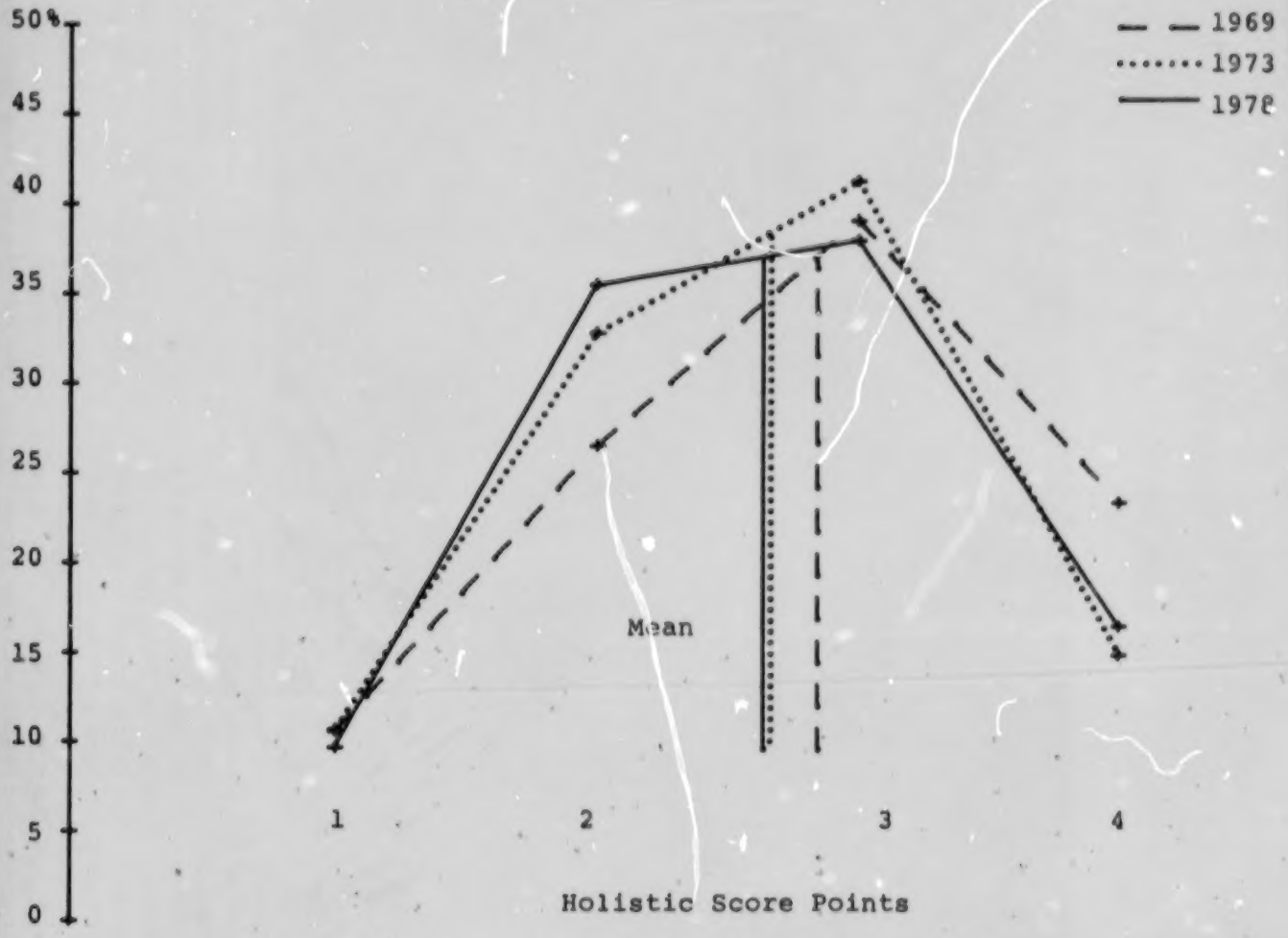


TABLE 3-1. Percentages of Descriptive Papers at Each Holistic Score Point, Age 13, 1969, 1973, 1978†

Year	Holistic Score					
	1	2	3	4	3 & 4	Mean
1969 (n = 395)	10.6%	26.6%	39.2%	23.5%	62.7%	2.64
1973 (n = 420)	10.7	32.9	41.4	15.0	56.4	2.66
1978 (n = 536)	9.7	35.6	38.1	16.6	54.7	2.63
Change						
1969-73	0.1	6.3	2.2	-8.5	-6.3	-0.18*
1973-78	-1.0	2.7	-3.3	1.6	-1.7	-0.03
1969-78	-0.9	9.0	-1.1	-6.9	-8.0	-0.21*

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

were rated 3 or 4. In contrast, only a sixth of the 1978 papers were rated 4 and slightly more than half were rated 3 or 4.

It appears, then, that there are not as many good 13-year-old writers as there used to be and that the situation has stabilized since the mid-seventies.

2. Judgments of Rhetorical Skills

Rhetorical skills are essential to effective writing. A social studies report, for instance, may be beautifully composed and error free, but ineffective because the writer did not include the information the reader needed, or provided far more information than was necessary. The National Assessment objectives for writing recognize this by calling for different kinds of writing for different audiences under different circumstances.

In addition to the descriptive essay discussed above, 13-year-olds were asked to write two expressive papers, one persuasive letter and one business letter. All but the last were administered in at least two assessments. No single student was required to do more than one writing task because the tasks were assigned to separate national samples of participants.

a. Expressive Writing

Expressive writing is writing done primarily for fun and self-expression, rather than for some other purpose, such as explanation or persuasion. This by no means diminishes its importance, for the skills involved in expressive discourse are central to all kinds of communication. Accordingly, many teachers develop student writing skills and capitalize on student enthusiasm at the same time by providing frequent expressive opportunities.

The first expressive task 13-year-olds were given was this one:

> *Pretend that when you got up this morning, you looked out the window and saw that it was raining. How did you feel?*
>
> *Think for a while about the feelings you have on a rainy morning. Then write a composition telling how a rainy school morning makes you feel.*

Although this appears to be a simple enough task, it is not. Many people have difficulty writing about feelings. Their first drafts serve to get the feelings named, but they usually need another draft in which to shape and harmonize the feelings, especially if they are contradictory or complex. In the assessment, students only had one chance to write the paper, of course, so the results should be considered with this in mind.

The primary trait scoring guide was designed to evaluate success in expressing feelings through systematic elaboration of details that create a mood. The feelings may be either simple or

complex, but they should be clear to the reader, not abstract or undetailed. The four levels of quality (1 is poorest, 4 is best) are detailed in Appendix A. Briefly, they involved the following criteria:

1 = *Little or no expression of feelings.* These responses do not fulfill the two basic conditions established by the trait—stating a feeling and elaborating that feeling.

2 = *Minimal expression of feelings.* These responses minimally fulfill the two basic conditions established by the trait: (1) they name or clearly imply a feeling and (2) they name some of the consequences of the situation that account for that feeling. Ambivalence (feeling both good and bad) about rainy school days is legitimate, as long as it is expressed clearly.

3 = *Expression of feeling.* These responses precisely establish a dominant feeling and elaborate it using a variety of specific details consistent with the feeling. Some principle of arrangement is present. Generally, these papers clearly show competence in expressing and substantiating a feeling, but they do not show simultaneous control of both structure and detail.

4 = *Developed and elaborated expression of feeling.* These responses precisely define a feeling or feelings and substantiate them through an amplitude and variety of appropriate details. The details are systematically arranged and placed into a structure and tight control is demonstrated at all points.

Table 3-2 presents the results for the three assessments. The data show that if 3 and 4 are considered the only acceptable scores, very few 13-year-olds performed successfully in 1969 and fewer still do so today. If level 2 papers are included, however, the picture changes: two-thirds of the students wrote at least minimally acceptable papers and that proportion did not change between 1969 and 1978.

Some evidence of a dip between the first two assessments appears in the percentages of 3 and 4 papers, but it may be that the students hit their lowest point in 1973 and are rebounding. Significantly more wrote good papers in 1978 than did in 1973. In summary, then, the data offer "bad" news—few 13-year-olds excel at this kind of writing and the percentage is lower than it was a decade ago—and "good" news—the teenagers may be rebounding from their plunge in the mid-seventies and most can do this difficult kind of writing in a minimal sort of way.

TABLE 3-2. Percentages of 13-Year-Olds at Each Primary Trait Score Level, "Rainy Day" Exercise, 1969, 1973, 1978†

Year	Score Point						
	Non-rateable	Little or No Feelings	Minimal Feelings	Expressed Feelings	Elaborated Feelings	Marginal or Better	Competent or Better
	0	1	2	3	4	2, 3 & 4	3 & 4
1969 (n = 2,408)	1.6%	32.3%	55.9%	9.3%	0.9%	66.0%	10.2%
1973 (n = 2,621)	1.2	32.9	61.8	3.7	0.2	65.8	4.0
1978 (n = 2,804)	0.5	33.2	60.1	5.7	0.5	66.3	6.2
Change							
1969-73	-0.4	0.6	6.0*	-5.6*	-0.8*	-0.2	-6.2*
1973-78	-0.7	0.2	-1.8	2.0*	0.2	0.5	2.2*
1969-78	-1.1*	0.9	4.2*	-3.6*	-0.4	0.2	-4.0*

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

Table C-1 (in Appendix C) and Exhibits 3-2 and 3-3 display group results. Exhibit 3-2 shows that when papers rated 3 and 4 are considered, almost all of the groups, like the nation, declined slightly between the first and second assessments and improved somewhat between the second and third. Black youngsters improved their relative position considerably over the decade, moving from a significant 6 points below the national level virtually to the national level, primarily because the nation declined more than they did. When score points 2, 3 and 4 are combined (Exhibit 3-3), the black youngsters moved from 18 points below the national level in 1969 to a nonsignificant 5 points below in 1978, a 13-point improvement over the decade. About three-fourths of that change is attributable to a decrease in their percentage of 0 and 1 papers and an increase in their percentage of papers rated 2 and 3.

Disadvantaged-urban students did not show the same pattern of improvement noted at age 17 (see Chapter 4 and Volume I of this report). The group showed improvement between the first two assessments, but declined between the second and third. In 1969 and in 1978, half of this group's papers were rated 0 or 1.

Advantaged-urban students at this age wrote the same proportion of competent papers in 1978 as they did in 1969, thus improving their position relative to a shrinking national percentage. In 1969 they did not show a statistically significant advantage, but in 1978 they were 6 points above the nation in competent papers and 9 points above in marginal or better papers. A similar pattern emerged for the Northeastern group, which actually improved its percentage of marginal or better papers, thus improving its relative standing to 6 points above the nation.

Thirteen-year-old girls wrote better, as a group, than boys in each assessment. In 1978, their percentage of 3 and 4 papers was 6 points higher, and their percentage of 2, 3 and 4 papers was 12 points higher. The latter figure represents a lessening of their advantage, which was 17 points in 1969.

Another expressive task elicited papers about the experience of loss. This was the assignment:

Everybody knows or can imagine what it is like to lose something or someone of special importance. Valuable things may be lost or broken, close friends or relatives may die or move away, favorite pets may be lost or killed.

Think of some loss you have experienced. Tell what you especially remember about what you lost, and how it feels to experience such a loss. Space is provided below and on the next two pages.

Like the "Rainy Day" exercise, this one is not as easy as it may appear. Loss arouses particularly strong emotions; we would expect people to need several drafts before they could harness and organize those feelings in an effective piece of writing. The assignment also calls for two activities—establishing the value of something lost by relating a memory about it and describing the feelings associated with the experience. Some people might be able to recover the memory, but not be able to recover the feelings. Some people might choose to recover neither. Others might be willing to do it for a known and trusted audience, but not for the anonymous readers of assessment papers.

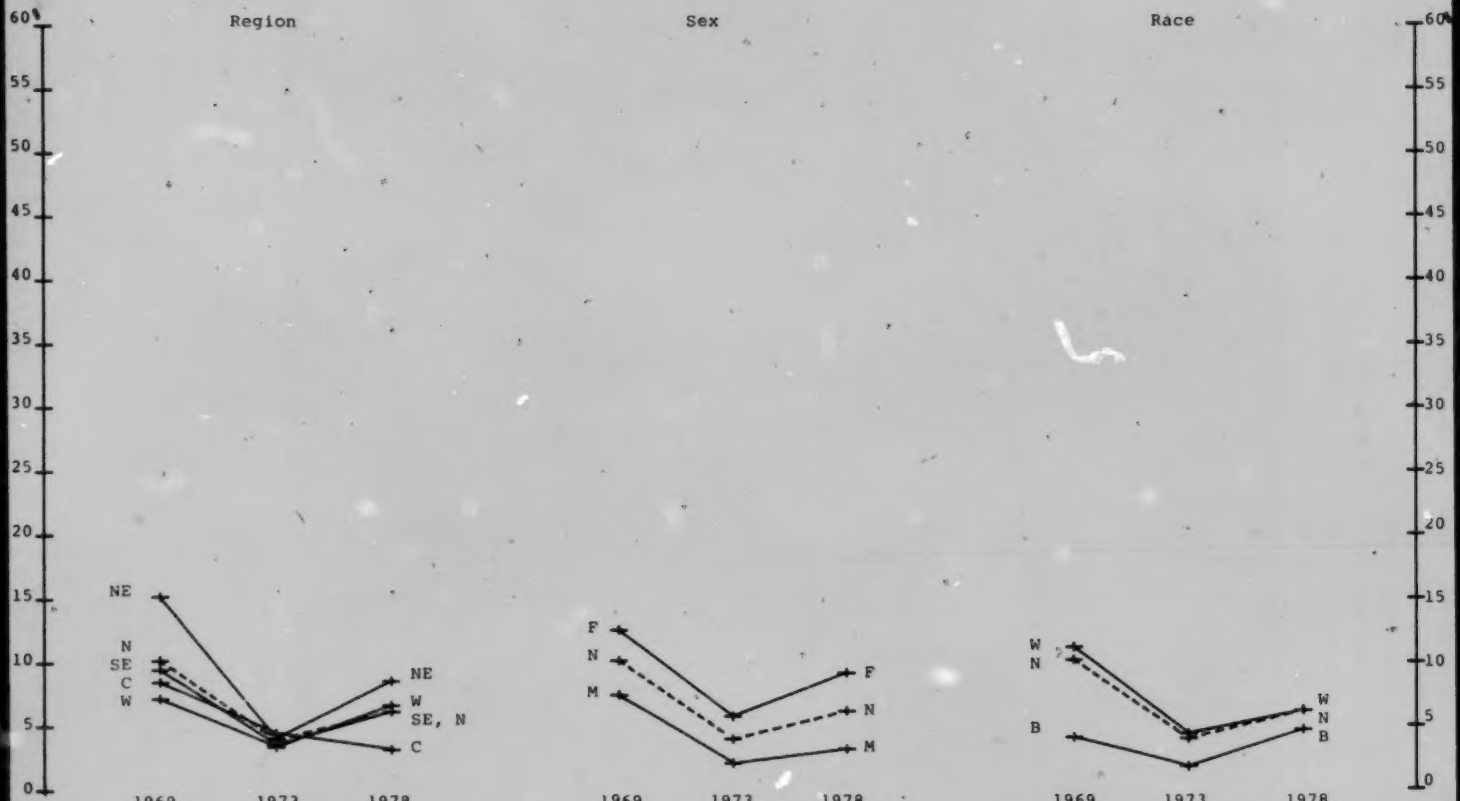
The four score points are defined fully in Appendix A and briefly below. Papers categorized as 1, 2 or 3 were also subcategorized along lines described in Appendix A.

1 = *Little or no expression of value and feeling.* These responses show no or only vague evidence of using writing to express and substantiate value and feeling through recollection and elaboration of details concerning a particular loss.

2 = *Moderate expression of value and feeling.* These responses show evidence of using writing to express and substantiate value and feeling through recollection and inventive elaboration of details concerning a particular loss.

3 = *Expression of value and feeling.* These papers use writing to express and substantiate value and feeling through recollection and inventive elaboration of details.

EXHIBIT 3–2. Group Changes in Percentages of "Rainy Day" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 13, 1969 to 1973 and 1973 to 1978

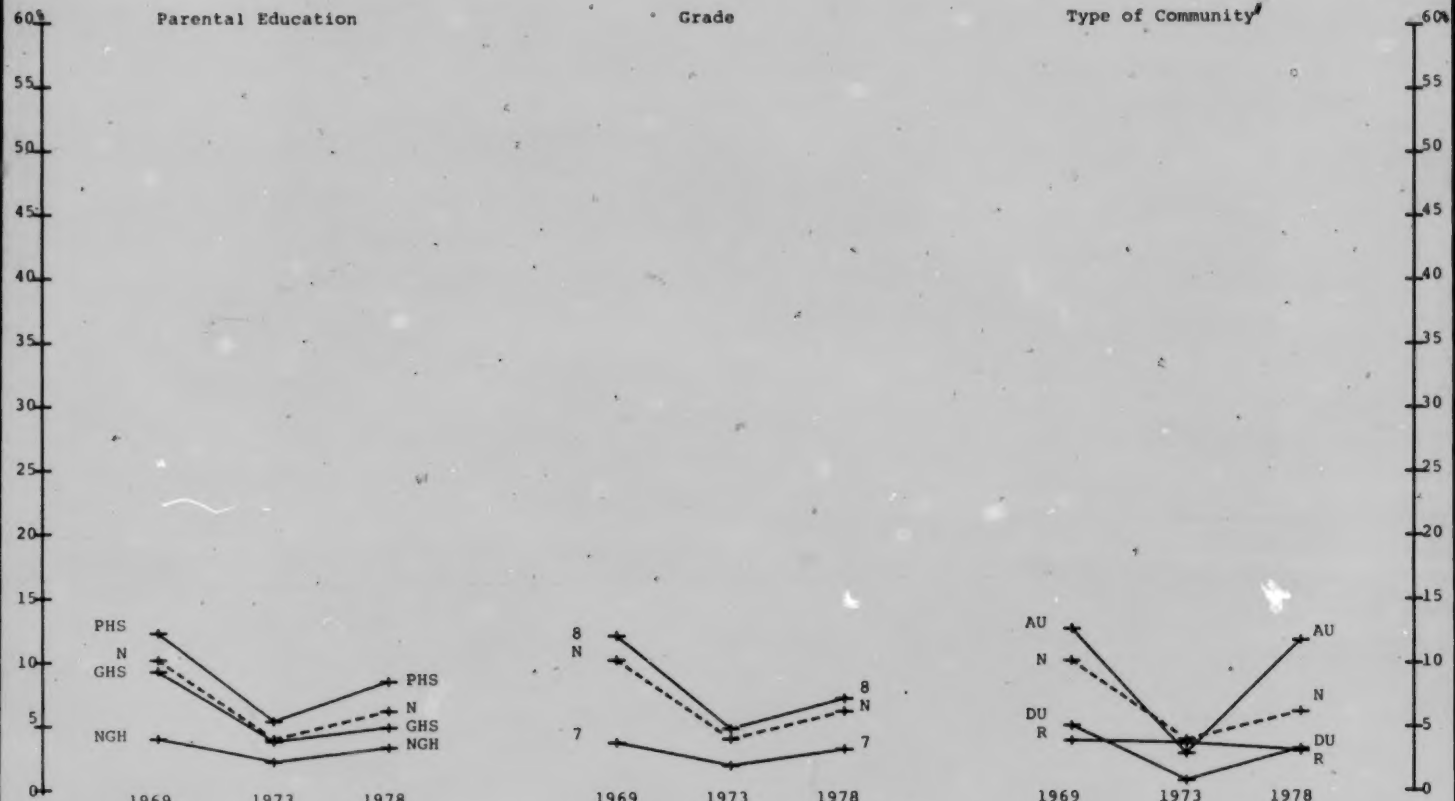


	1969	1973	1978
NE	15.2%	4.1%	8.6%
W	7.2	3.4	6.7
C	8.5	4.5	3.2
SE	9.5	3.6	6.2
N	10.2	4.0	6.2

	1969	1973	1978
F	12.6%	5.8%	9.2%
M	7.3	2.1	3.2
N	10.2	4.0	6.2

	1969	1973	1978
W	11.2%	4.4%	6.2%
B	4.1	1.8	4.7
N	10.2	4.0	6.2

EXHIBIT 3–2 *(Continued).* **Group Changes in Percentages of "Rainy Day" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 13, 1969 to 1973 and 1973 to 1978**



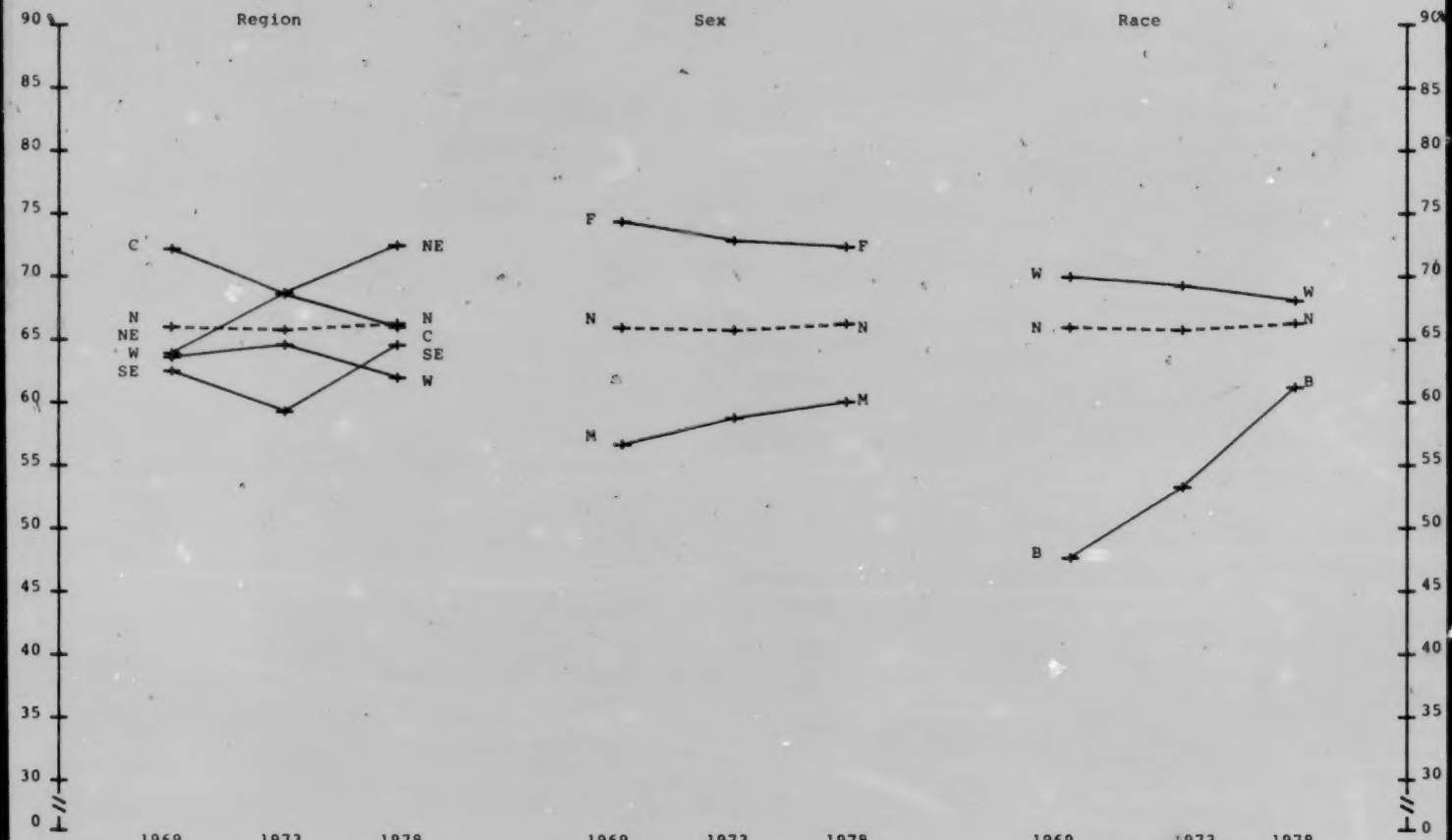
	1969	1973	1978
PHS	12.3%	5.4%	8.5%
GHS	9.3	3.8	4.9
NGH	4.0	2.2	3.3
N	10.2	4.0	6.2

	1969	1973	1978
8	12.1%	4.8%	7.2%
7	3.7	1.9	3.2
N	10.2	4.0	6.2

	1969	1973	1978
AU	12.7%	2.9%	11.8%
R	3.9	3.7	3.1
DU	5.1	0.8	3.3
N	10.2	4.0	6.2

*These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

EXHIBIT 3–3. Group Changes in Percentages of "Rainy Day" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 13, 1969 to 1973 and 1973 to 1978

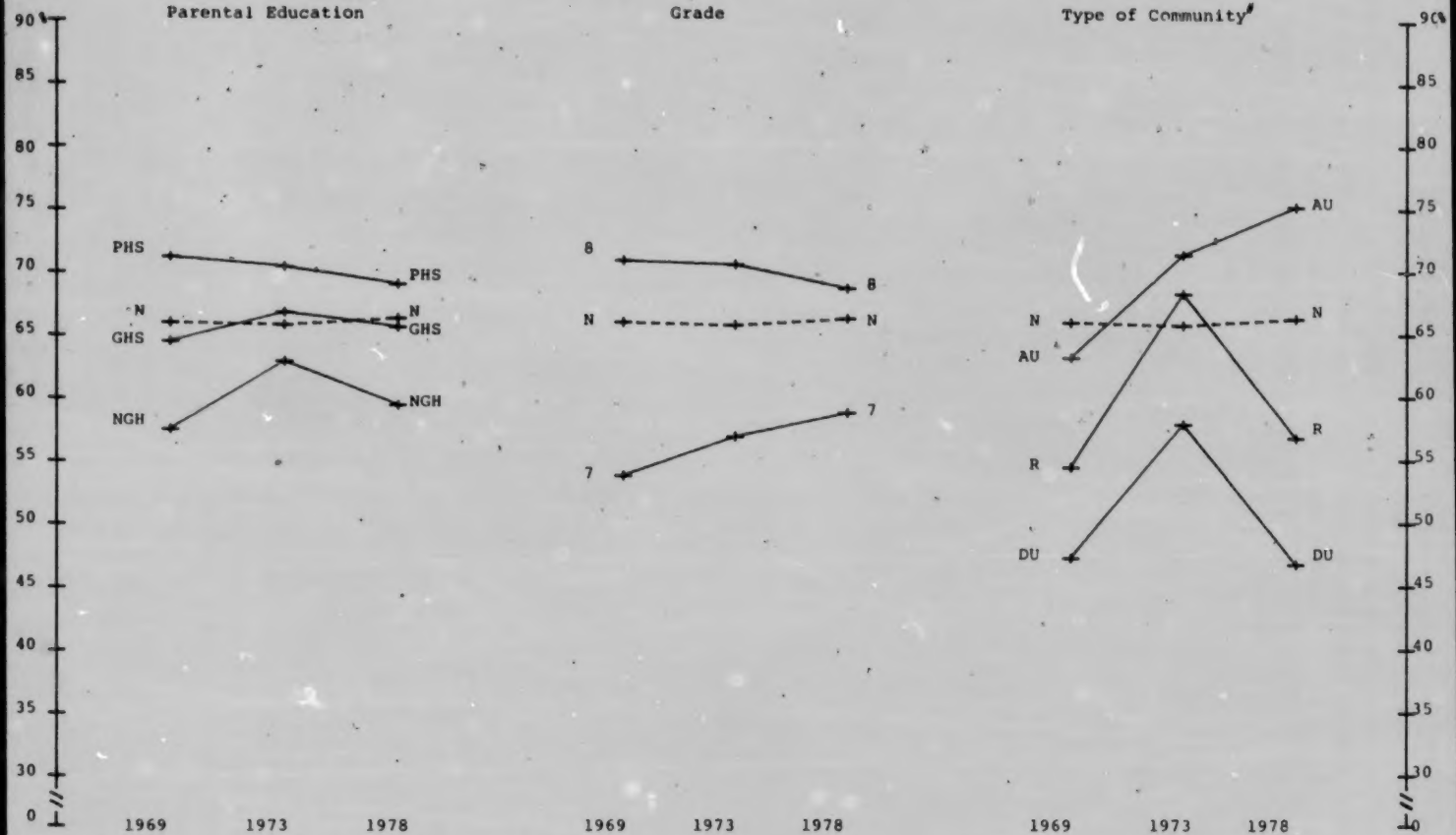


	1969	1973	1978
NE	63.9%	68.7	72.5
W	63.6	64.6	62.0
C	72.2	68.6	66.0
SE	62.5	59.3	64.6
N	66.0	65.8	66.3

	1969	1973	1978
F	74.4	72.9	72.4
M	56.7	58.8	60.1
N	66.0	65.8	66.3

	1969	1973	1978
W	70.0	69.3	68.1
B	47.7	53.3	61.2
N	66.0	65.8	66.3

EXHIBIT 3–3 *(Continued).* **Group Changes in Percentages of "Rainy Day" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 13, 1969 to 1973 and 1973 to 1978**



Parental Education	1969	1973	1978
PHS	71.2%	70.4%	69.0%
GHS	64.5	66.8	65.6
NGH	57.5	62.9	59.4
N	66.0	65.8	66.3

Grade	1969	1973	1978
8	70.9%	70.6%	68.7%
7	53.8	56.9	58.8
N	66.0	65.8	66.3

Type of Community*	1969	1973	1978
AU	63.2%	71.4%	75.2%
R	54.5	68.3	56.8
DU	47.3	57.9	46.8
N	66.0	65.8	66.3

*These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

4 = *Developed elaboration of expression of value and feeling.* These papers express and substantiate value and feeling at length, and they do so through details that are sufficiently specific and vivid to establish the precise quality of what has been lost and the nature of the feelings experienced about the loss. These papers tend to be well organized and develop the experiential quality of the loss.

Table 3-3 displays the results for the two assessments (1973 and 1978) of which this exercise was a part. Somewhat more than half the teenagers wrote papers that revealed at least minimal skill in using writing to express and substantiate value and feelings. There has been virtually no change in that proportion between 1973 and 1978.

TABLE 3-3. Percentages of 13-Year-Olds at Each Primary Trait Score Level, "Loss" Exercise, 1973, 1978†

Year	Score Point						
	Non-rateable	Little Value/ Feeling	Some Value/ Feeling	Clear Value/ Feeling	Elaborated Both	Marginal or Better	Competent or Better
	0	1	2	3	4	2, 3 & 4	3 & 4
1973 (n = 2,607)	2.2%	42.0%	36.1%	18.5%	1.2%	55.8%	19.7%
1978 (n = 2,775)	1.9	39.6	38.6	18.4	1.4	58.4	19.8
Change 1973-78	-0.2	-2.4	2.5	-0.1	0.2	2.6	0.1

†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

Further investigation within categories does show some changes over time. Whereas in 1973 the papers categorized as "1" were about evenly spread among factual reports (15%), lists of losses (16%) and extremely sparse papers (12%), those percentages shifted in 1978 to almost 20% factual reports and 8% lists. This might be viewed as progress of sorts. The percentage of extremely brief papers remained the same.

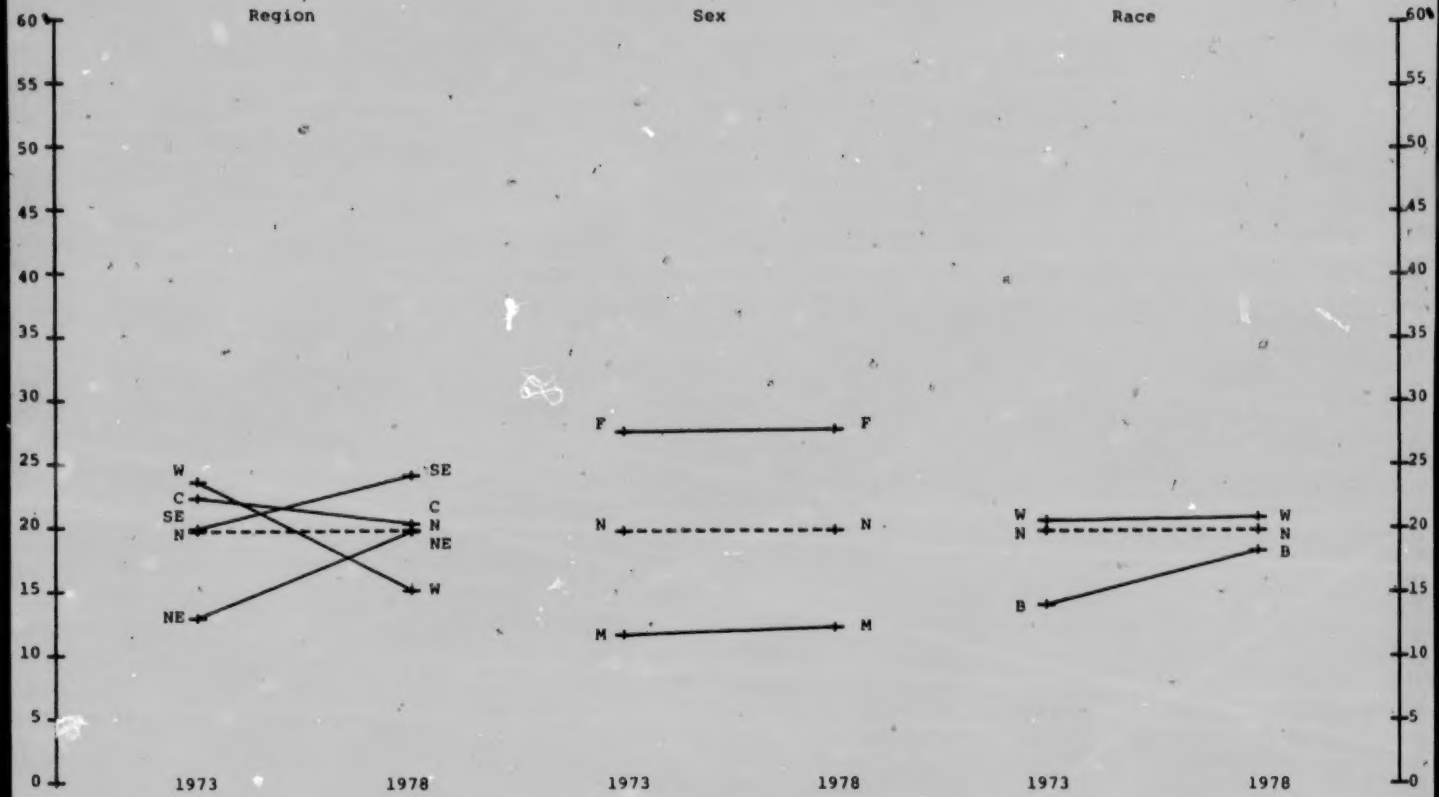
Since the exercise required detailed expression of both value and feeling, category "2" and "3" papers were further classified as to whether they focused on expressing feelings about the loss, and substantiated those feelings by explaining the value of what was lost, or whether they used a balanced approach lacking in detail. Whereas 31% used a balanced approach in 1973, significantly fewer (27%) did so in 1978. More writers chose to emphasize feelings in 1978 (25%) than in 1973 (18%). Only a few writers of "2" and "3" papers emphasized the value of what was lost in either assessment.

Table C-3 (in Appendix C) and Exhibits 3-4 and 3-5 display group results. Both Southeastern and Northeastern students improved between assessments. On marginal or better papers (2, 3 and 4 combined), the Southeastern group's relative position moved from slightly below the national level in 1973 to 5 points above by 1978. Northeastern students improved their relative position on competent or better papers (3 and 4 combined) from 7 points below to the national level.

In both assessments, far more females than males wrote good papers. The difference between the sexes was 16 points on competent papers and around 20 points on marginal or better papers.

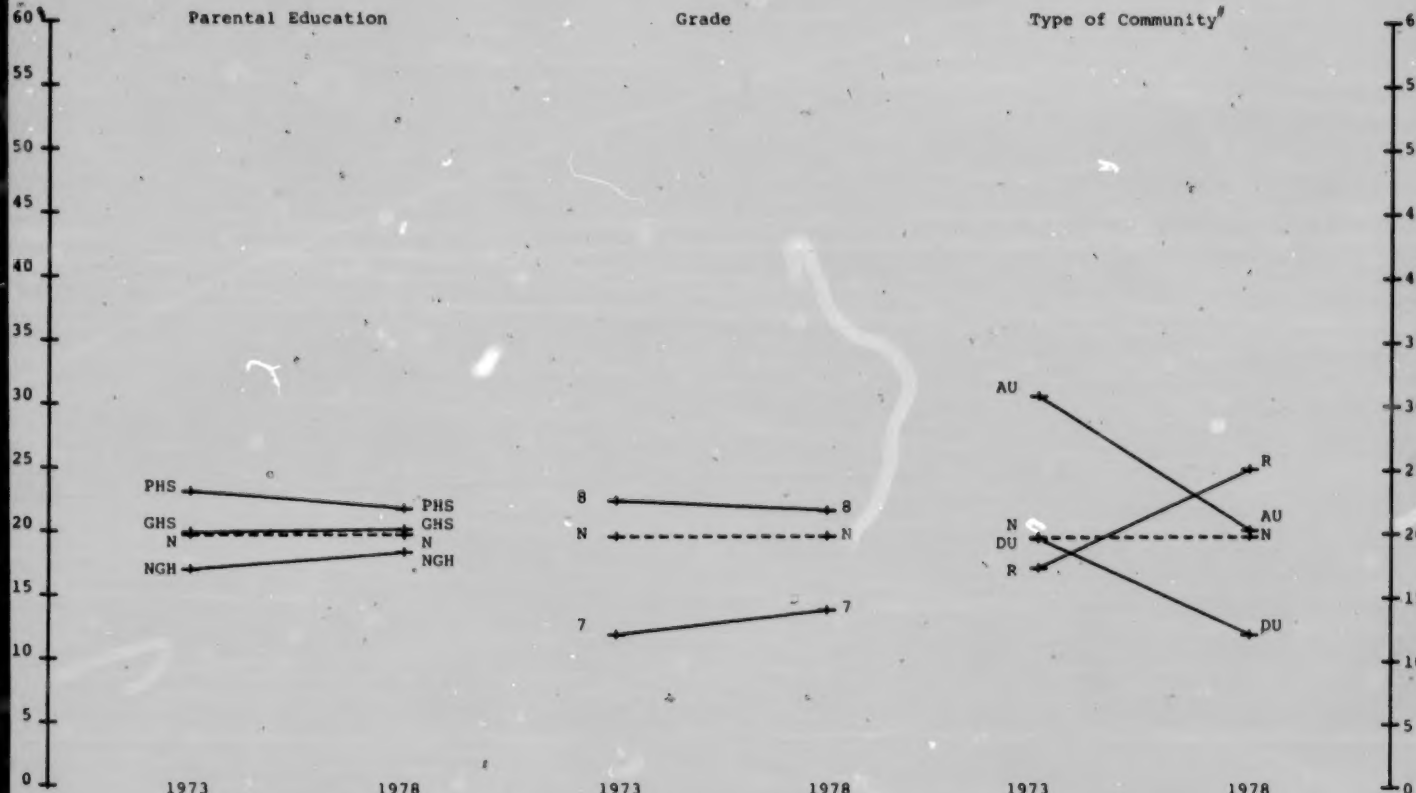
Black writers, as with the last exercise, improved considerably between the two assessments, moving even with the nation on the percentage of papers rated 3 and 4, and halving their difference from the national level on papers rated 2, 3 and 4. The advance was due to the fact that they improved while the nation stayed at the same level.

EXHIBIT 3–4. Group Changes in Percentages of "Loss" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 13, 1973 to 1978



	Region			Sex			Race	
	1973	1978		1973	1978		1973	1978
NE	12.9%	19.7%	F	27.5%	27.7%	W	20.5%	20.8%
W	23.6	15.1	M	11.6	12.2	B	13.9	18.2
C	22.3	20.3	N	19.7	19.8	N	19.7	19.8
SE	19.9	24.1						
N	19.7	19.8						

EXHIBIT 3–4 *(Continued).* **Group Changes in Percentages of "Loss" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 13, 1973 to 1978**



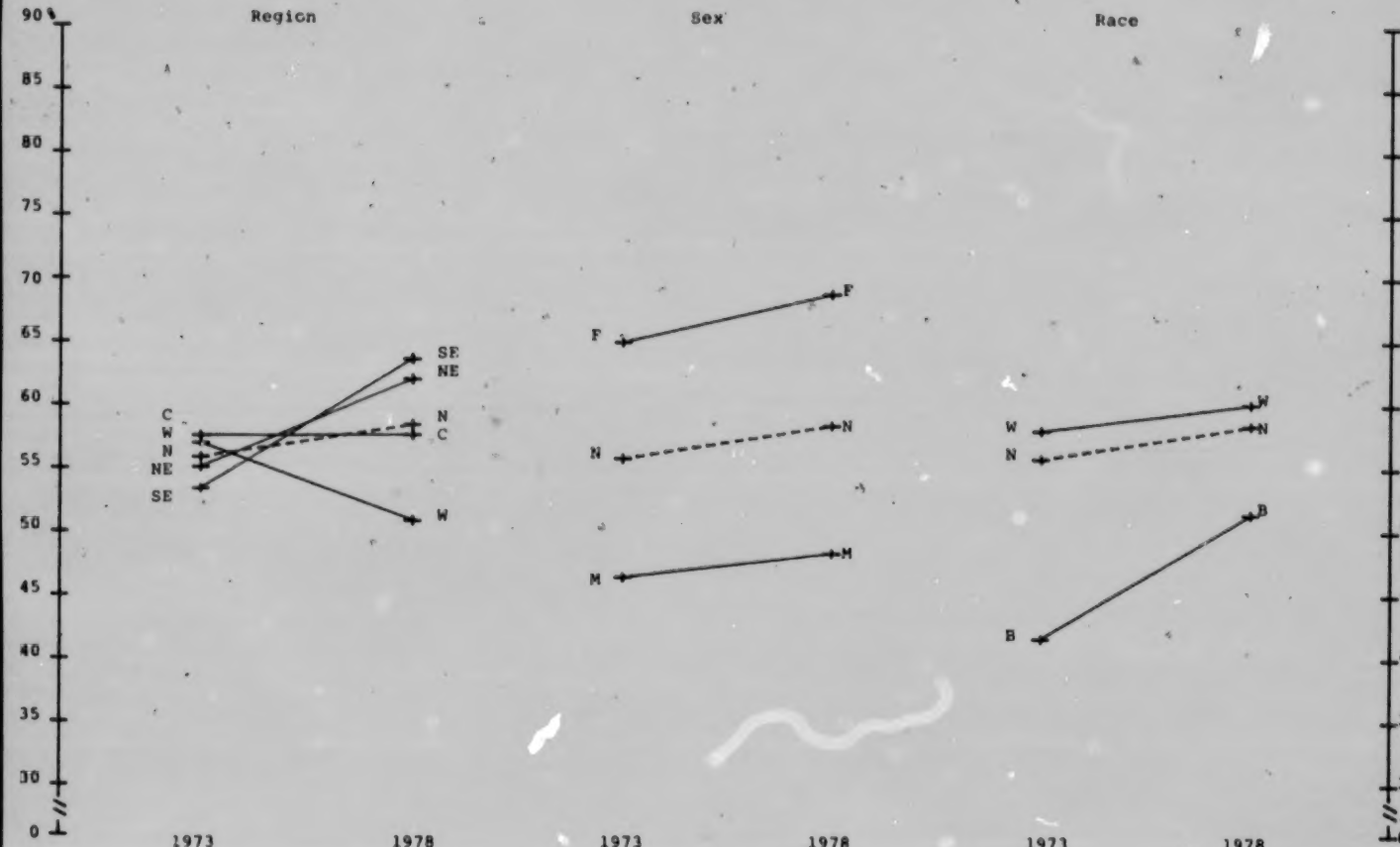
Parental Education	1973	1978
PHS	23.1%	21.8%
GHS	19.9	20.2
NGH	17.0	18.4
N	19.7	19.8

Grade	1973	1978
8	22.5%	21.8%
7	12.0	14.0
N	19.7	19.8

Type of Community*	1973	1978
AU	30.8%	20.3%
R	17.3	25.1
DU	19.6	12.1
N	19.7	19.8

*These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

EXHIBIT 3–5. Group Changes in Percentages of "Loss" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 13, 1973 to 1978

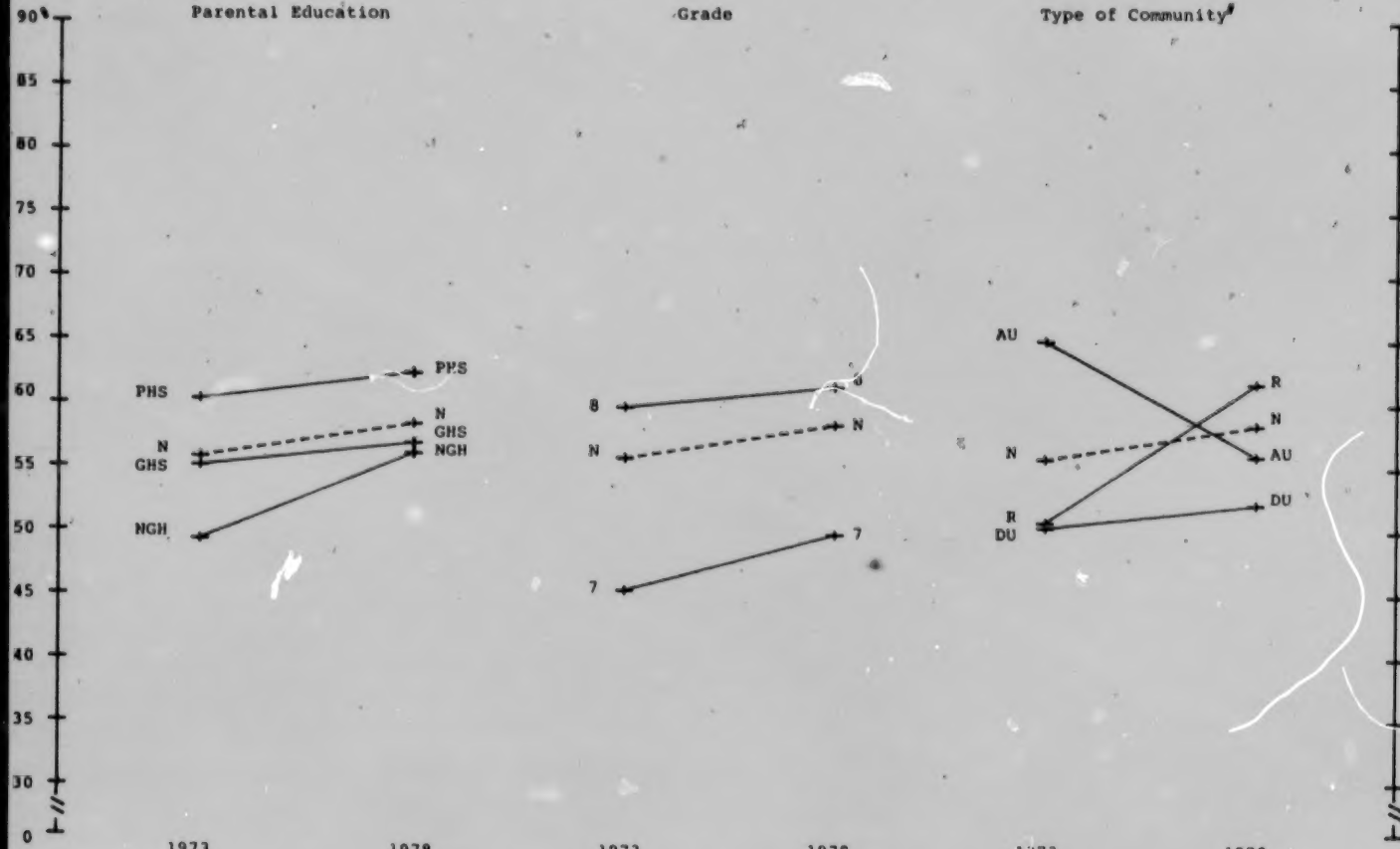


Region	1973	1978
NE	55.0%	62.0%
W	56.9	50.8
C	57.5	57.6
SE	53.3	63.6
N	55.8	58.4

Sex	1973	1978
F	65.0%	68.8%
M	46.4	48.3
N	55.8	58.4

Race	1973	1978
W	58.0%	60.1%
B	41.6	51.4
N	55.8	58.4

EXHIBIT 3–5 *(Continued).* **Group Changes in Percentages of "Loss" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 13, 1973 to 1978**



Parental Education	1973	1978
PHS	60.3%	62.4%
GHS	55.1	56.9
NGH	49.3	56.1
N	55.8	58.4

Grade	1973	1978
8	59.8%	61.4%
7	45.4	49.8
N	55.8	58.4

Type of Community*	1973	1978
AU	65.1%	56.0%
R	50.8	61.7
DU	50.4	52.2
N	55.8	58.4

*These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

Disadvantaged-urban students did not improve their relative standing on this exercise. Eight percent fewer wrote competent or better papers. Advantaged-urban students' 9 to 11-point edge over the nation in 1973 appears to have vanished, mostly because of an increase in the percentage of papers rated 1—42% in 1978, compared with 33% in 1973. Even though the results are not statistically significant, rural students appear to have made gains, both for papers rated 3 and 4 and those rated 2, 3 and 4.

b. Persuasive Writing

Expressive writing provides training in a multitude of skills and strategies for elaborating, being precise and making concrete what one wants to say. These skills are useful in all the other modes of discourse as well. Persuasive writing calls for additional skills in argument, logic and presentation. In addition to their expressive tasks, the 13-year-olds were also asked to write in response to this persuasive task:

> *Imagine that your principal asked for suggestions about how to make things better in your school. Write a letter to your principal telling just ONE thing you think should be changed, how to bring about the change, and how the school will be improved by it. Space is provided below and on the next three pages. Sign your letter "Chris Johnson."*

In order to write a successful letter, a student must consider the audience, focus clearly on a single change or problem, develop ideas about its implementation and argue convincingly that the effort would be worthwhile. Accordingly, the following criteria (detailed in Appendix A) defined four levels of quality in the responses:

1 = *Do not define and defend a change.* Some "1" papers do not propose a change or identify a problem. They are simply statements of attitude, judgment, desire or dissatisfaction. Other "1" papers do identify a problem or recommend a change, but do not explain how to implement the change or solve the problem or tell how the school will be benefited.

2 = *Define a change and offer minimal defense.* These writers state a change they want made in their school or a problem that needs solving. In addition, they suggest how to bring about the change or mention some way the school will be improved by the proposed change or solution.

3 = *Define and defend a change.* These papers state a change or identify a problem, explain how to bring about the change or solve the problem and tell how the change will benefit the school. Reasoning is used to expand or explain at least one of the elements.

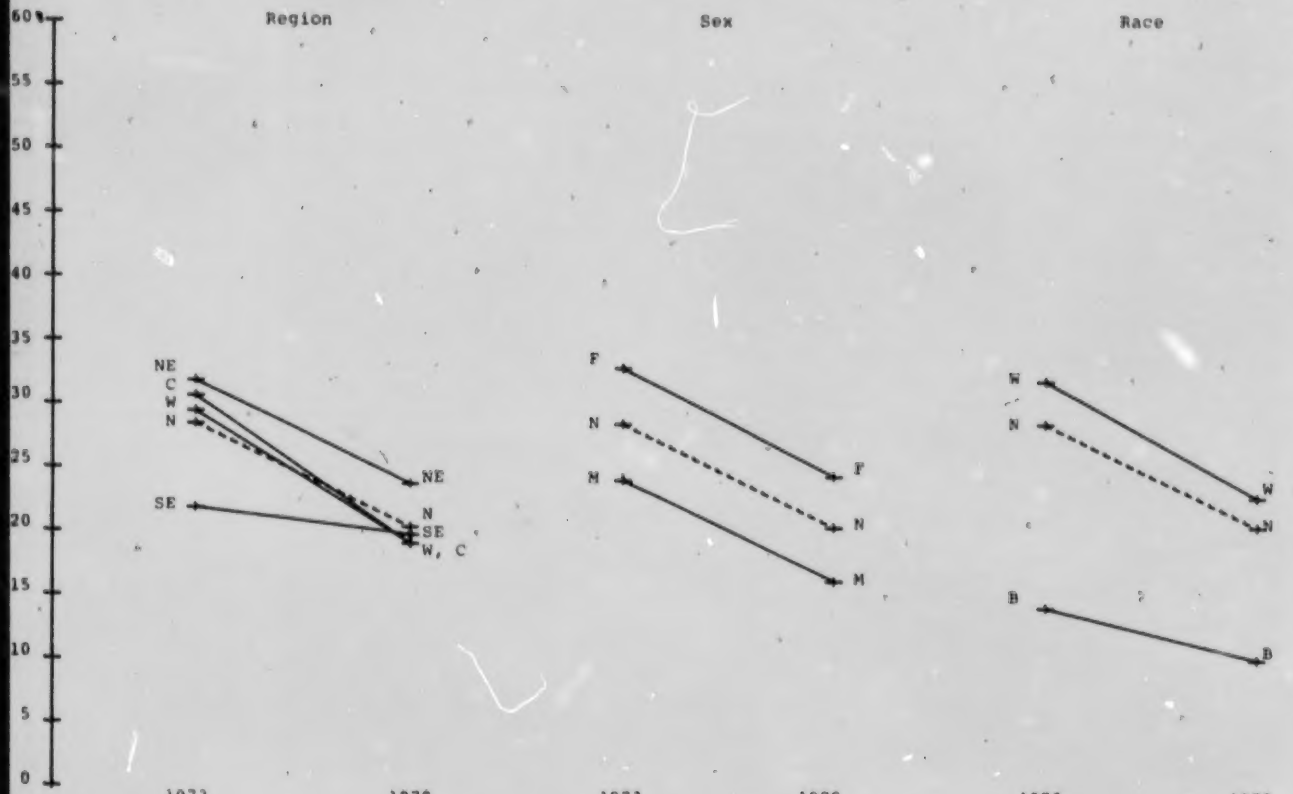
4 = *Systematically define and defend a change.* These papers have all the elements of "3" papers. In addition, they cast the material in a systematic structure that reflects the logical steps in the process of bringing about the change. At least two, and possibly all, of the elements are expanded so that the various issues are related to each other and to the proposition being defended.

Table 3-4 displays the percentages of papers at each score level. Clearly, there was a decline in the percentages of successful letters between 1973 and 1978. More students wrote papers scored 1 and 2, bringing down the percentages of level 3 and 4 papers.

Group results appear in Table C-4 in Appendix C, and in Exhibits 3-6 and 3-7. Looking at the data for teenagers who wrote papers scored 3 or 4 (Exhibit 3-6), it appears that the Southeast, as with the previous exercise, improved its relative standing appreciably by standing firm while the nation declined. So, too, did black youngsters, as a group, moving from about 14 points to 10 points below the national level by not declining quite as much as the nation. The disadvantaged-urban students, the advantaged-urban students and students with at least one parent with post high school education decreased even more than the nation.

The figures for students scoring 2, 3 or 4 again show that most groups follow the same pattern of

EXHIBIT 3–6. Group Changes in Percentages of "Principal Letter" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 13, 1973 to 1978

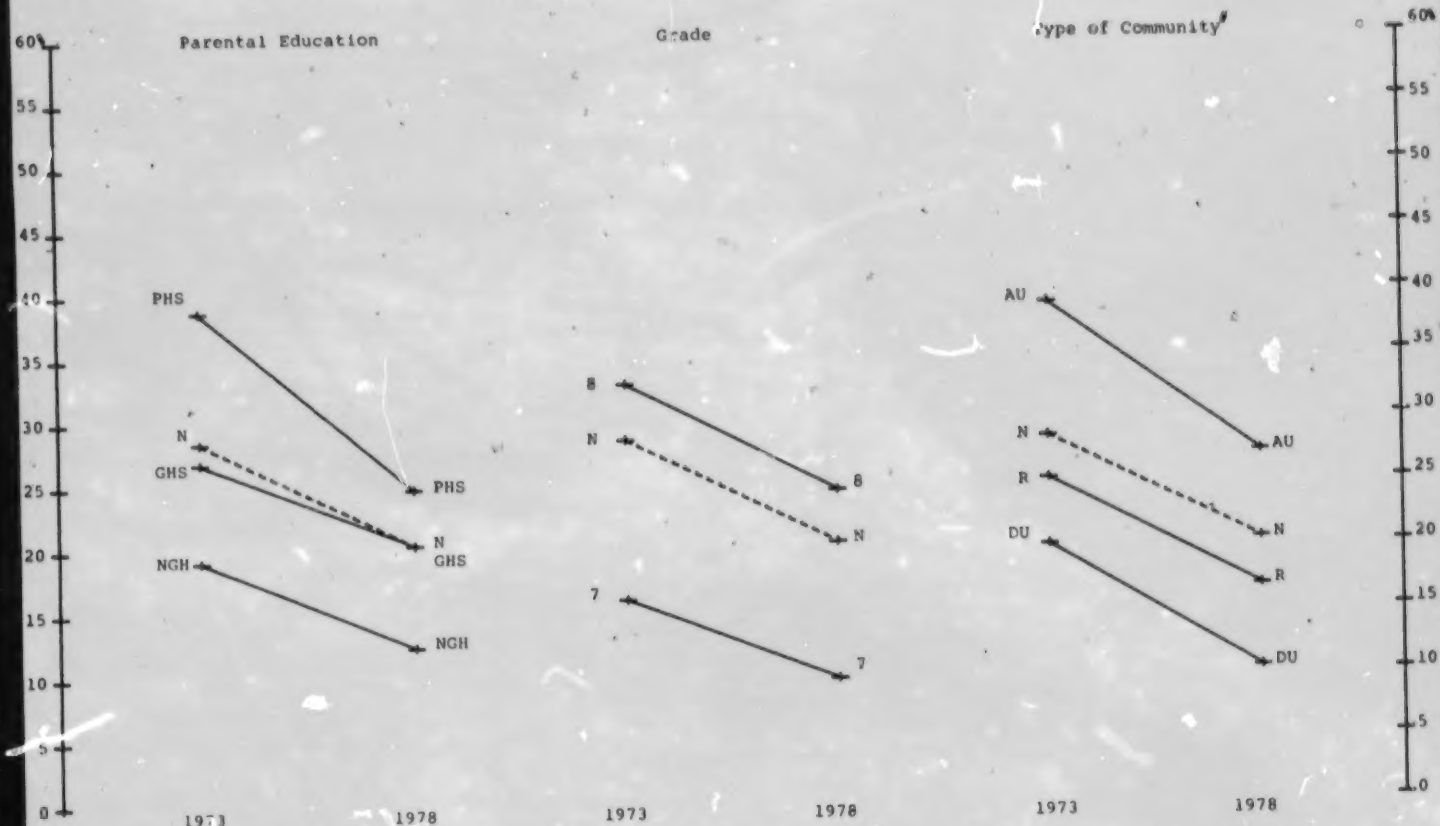


Region	1973	1978
NE	31.8%	23.7%
W	29.4	19.0
C	30.6	19.0
SE	21.8	19.7
N	28.4	20.3

Sex	1973	1978
F	32.8%	24.3%
M	24.0	16.1
N	28.4	20.3

Race	1973	1978
W	31.8%	22.6%
B	14.0	9.9
N	28.4	20.3

EXHIBIT 3–6 *(Continued).* **Group Changes in Percentages of "Principal Letter" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 13, 1973 to 1978**



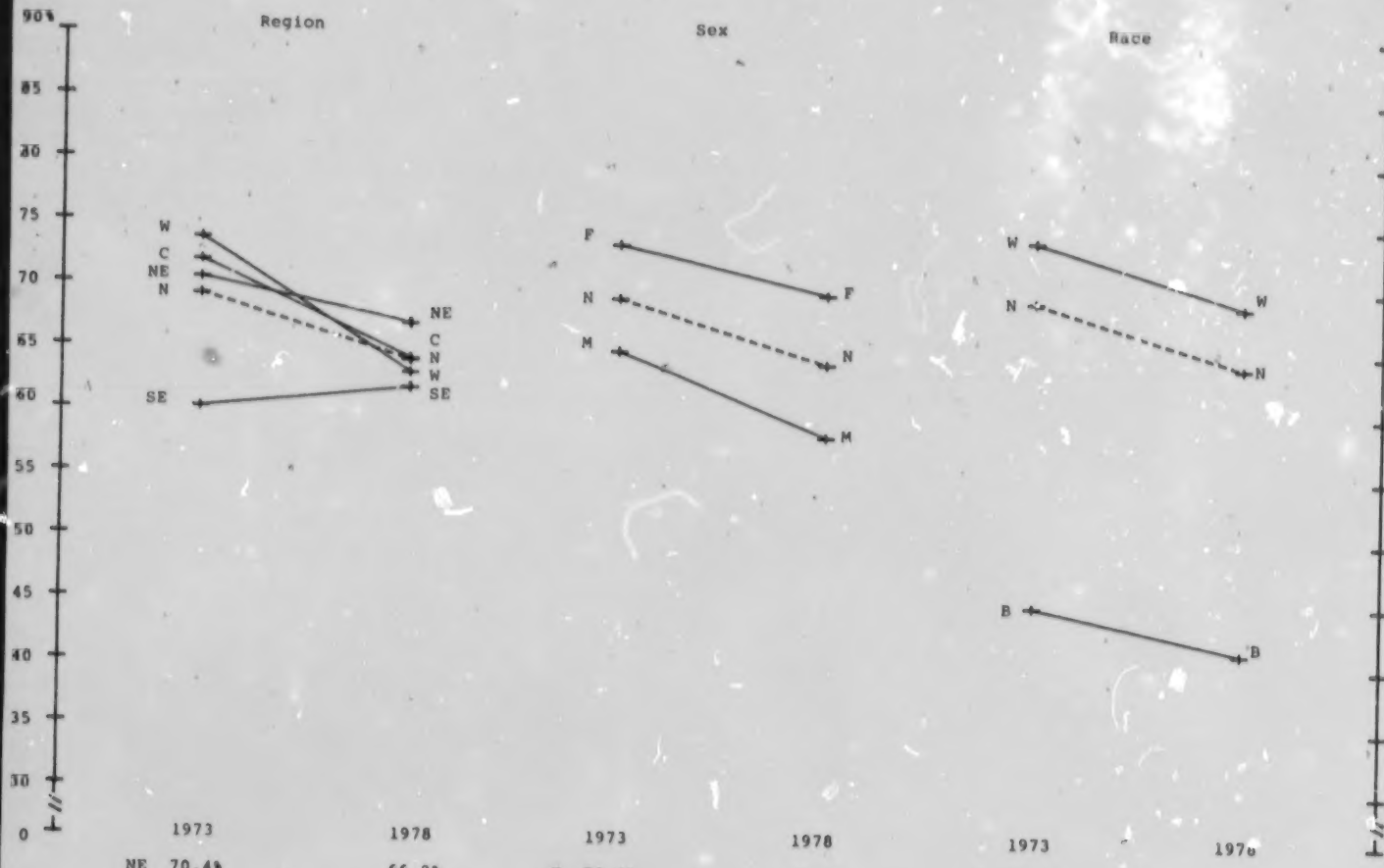
Parental Education	1973	1978
PHS	38.7%	24.7%
GHS	26.8	20.3
NGH	19.1	12.3
N	28.4	20.3

Grade	1973	1978
8	32.8%	24.4%
7	15.9	9.6
N	28.4	20.3

Type of Community*	1973	1978
AU	38.9%	27.1%
R	25.1	16.6
DU	19.9	10.2
N	28.4	20.3

*These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

EXHIBIT 3–7. Group Changes in Percentages of "Principal Letter" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 13, 1973 to 1978

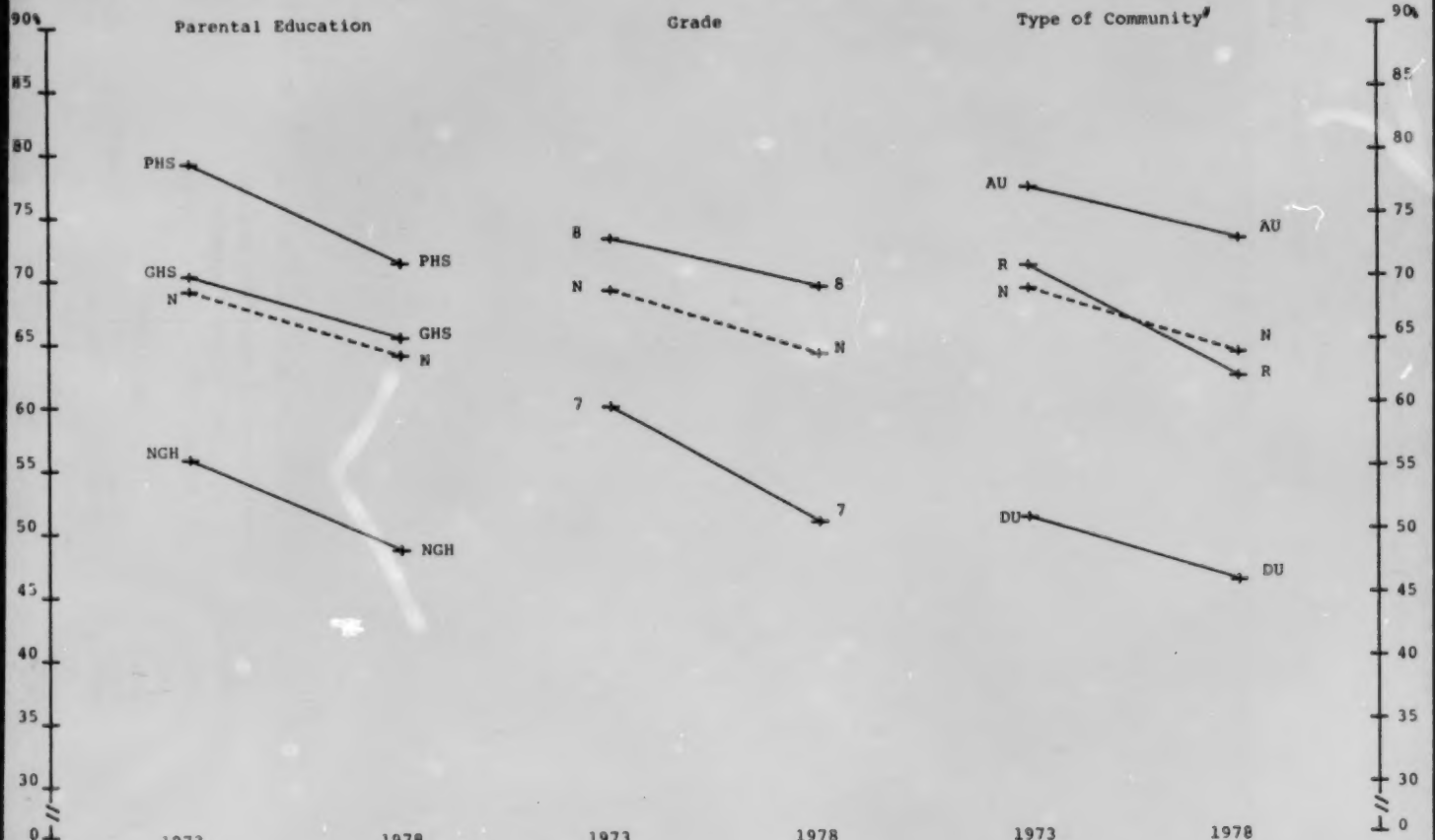


Region	1973	1978
NE	70.4%	66.9%
W	73.6	63.0
C	71.8	64.1
SE	60.1	61.8
N	69.1	64.0

Sex	1973	1978
F	73.4%	69.5%
M	64.9	58.2
N	69.1	64.0

Race	1973	1978
W	73.9%	68.8%
B	44.9	41.2
N	69.1	64.0

EXHIBIT 3–7 *(Continued).* **Group Changes in Percentages of "Principal Letter" Papers Rated 2, 3 and 4, Primary Trait, Age 13, 1973 to 1978**



	1973	1978
PHS	79.2%	71.3%
GHS	70.3	65.4
NGH	55.8	48.6
N	69.1	64.0

	1973	1978
8	73.2%	69.3%
7	59.9	50.7
N	69.1	64.0

	1973	1978
AU	77.1%	73.0%
R	70.9	62.1
DU	51.0	46.0
N	69.1	64.0

*These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

TABLE 3-4. Percentages of 13-Year-Olds at Each Primary Trait Score Level, "Principal Letter" Exercise, 1973, 1978†

Year	Score Point						
	Non-rateable	Do Not Define and Defend	Minimal Define and Defend	Define and Defend	Systematic Define and Defend	Marginal or Better	Competent or Better
	0	1	2	3	4	2, 3 & 4	3 & 4
1973 (n = 2,552)	2.9%	28.0%	40.7%	25.2%	3.2%	69.1%	28.4%
1978 (n = 2,793)	2.3	33.6	43.7	18.5	1.8	64.0	20.3
Change 1973-78	-0.5	5.6*	2.9	-6.7*	-1.4*	-5.1*	-8.1*

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

decline as the nation. Students from the Southeast improved their standing by not declining, whereas the Western and rural groups declined even more than the nation.

c. Explanatory Writing

The National Assessment objectives in writing mention the importance of business or vocational writing, which often requires careful explanation. In 1978, the 13-year-olds were asked to demonstrate their skill in explanatory writing by performing a very common task: ordering something by mail. They were given a mail order advertisement for a poster calendar and were asked to write a letter requesting the calendar of their choice (they had two to choose from). The exercise and its scoring guides appear in Appendix A.

The exercise requires clear communication of the information necessary to insure receipt of a calendar. In other words, the letter must have the sender's name and address and it must ask for a particular calendar. Such letters received a score of 3. If the letter did not request a particular calendar but did include the name and address, it was scored 2. If it was incomplete in any crucial respects, it was scored 1. There was no score point 4, on the grounds that a successful letter was sufficient.

Table 3-5 presents the results for the nation, while appendix Table C-5 presents group results. The vast majority of students (80%) provided enough information to receive a particular calendar. Eighty-five percent at least provided enough information to receive *some* calendar. The percentage of papers rated 3 was 85% for girls, 86% for the post high school group and 88% for the advantaged-urban group. In contrast, the percentage for boys was 74%; for black youngsters, 63%; for the no-high-school group, 74%; and for the disadvantaged-urban group, 68%. Eighty-five percent of the eighth graders wrote successful letters, compared to 67% of the seventh graders.

TABLE 3-5. Percentages of 13-Year-Olds at Each Primary Trait Score Level, "Poster Calendar" Exercise, 1978†

Year	Score Point				
	Non-rateable	Incomplete	No Choice	Successful	Marginal or Better
	0	1	2	3	2 & 3
1978 (n = 2,776)	2.5%	12.5%	5.1%	79.9%	85.0%

†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

The percentages of letters containing each of the following important components of a successful letter were: the greeting, 89%; the name of the sender, 94%; the address of the sender, 87%; the request, 96%; the reference to the calendar/poster in general, 91%; and the stating of a specific choice of calendar, 90%. Clearly, the youngsters had little difficulty with this task.

B. What Are the Characteristics of the Papers? Descriptions of Cohesion, Syntax and Mechanics

In addition to being judged for overall (holistic) and rhetorical (PTS) quality, some of the papers written by 13-year-olds have been further analyzed in order to provide a detailed description of the kind of writing National Assessment collects. Some of the cohesion, syntax and mechanics features described here undoubtedly relate to the quality of the papers; some do not. All of them help us to understand the nature of this kind of writing, the complex interrelationships among various writing skills and the stability over time of specific essential linguistic constructions.

1. Cohesion

Cohesive ties are the devices writers use to link ideas and give their papers coherence. There are many kinds of cohesive ties and strategies. Some primary kinds—lexical cohesion, conjunction, reference, substitution and ellipsis—are illustrated in the cohesion scoring guide in Appendix A. In addition to specific devices, writers can try to achieve coherence by using rhythm, repetition, story frames, retrospective summing up and other such strategies to bind parts of an essay and guide the reader. Scorers were trained to recognize all these approaches and then were asked to categorize the "Rainy Day" papers—the same ones scored for primary trait—using the following scoring guide:

1 = *Little or no evidence of cohesion:* basically clauses and sentences are not connected beyond pairings.

2 = *Attempts at cohesion:* evidence of gathering details but little or no evidence that these details are meaningfully ordered. Very little would seem lost if the details were rearranged.

3 = *Cohesion:* details are both gathered and ordered. Cohesion does not necessarily lead to coherence, to the successful binding of parts so that the sense of the whole discourse is greater than the sense of its parts. In pieces of writing that are cohesive rather than coherent, there are large sections of details that cohere, but these sections stand apart *as* sections.

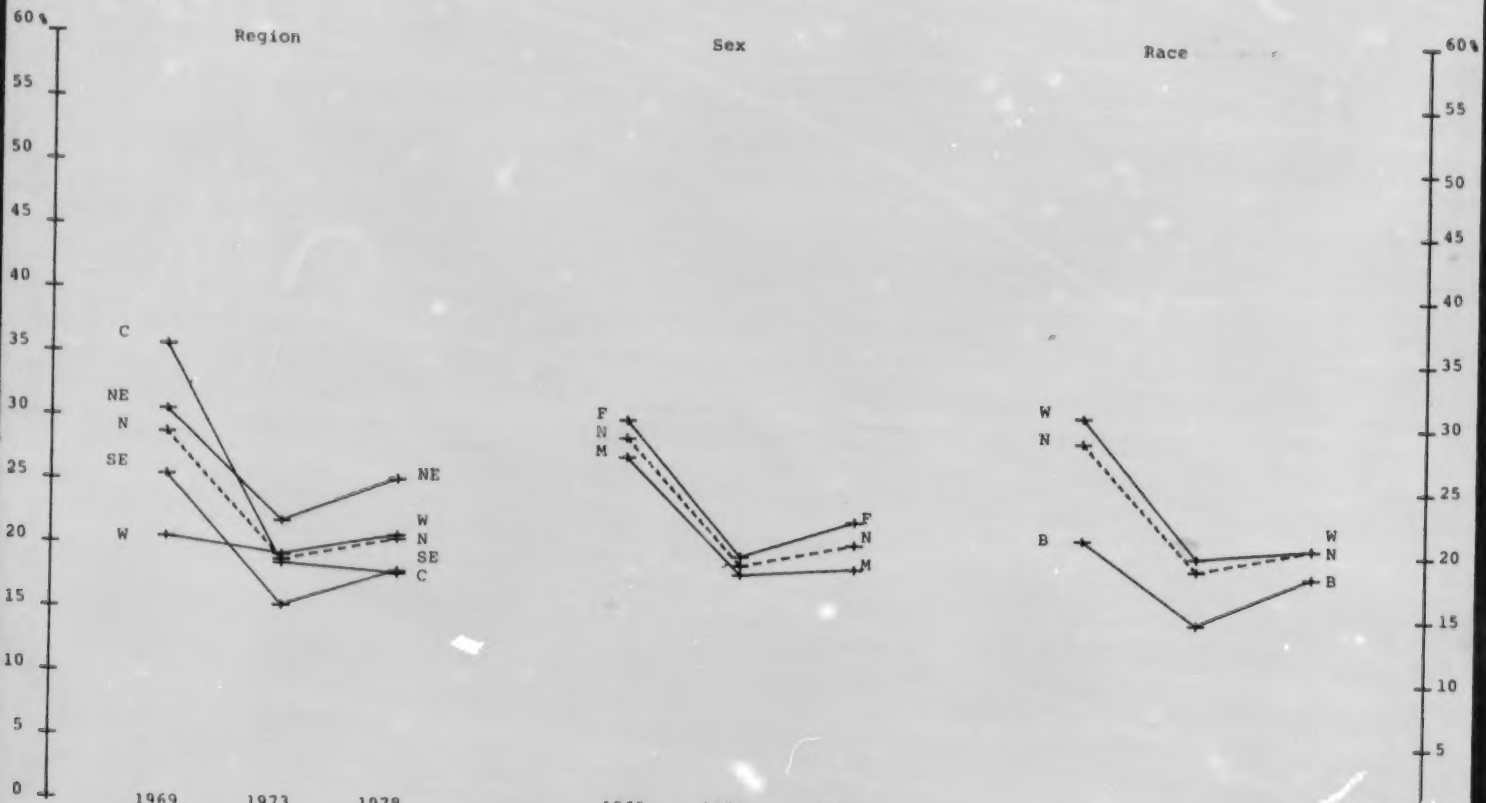
4 = *Coherence:* while there may be a sense of sections within the piece of writing, the sheer number and variety of cohesion strategies bind the details and sections into a wholeness. This sense of wholeness can be achieved by a saturation of syntactic repetition throughout the piece and/or by closure that retrospectively orders the entire piece.

Table 3-6 displays the distribution of cohesion scores for 1969, 1973 and 1978. Results for 2, 3 and 4 combined are not presented because level 2 papers are not really cohesive.

In 1969, 29% of the papers were in categories 3 and 4. In 1973, the percentage dropped to 19. Since then, it may have increased slightly, but the 1978 percentage still remains 8 points below the 1969 figure. These results parallel those described earlier for judgments about rhetorical skill on this exercise. This may be because it was difficult to create a unified mood without using some cohesive devices.

Exhibit 3-8 and Table C-2 (in Appendix C) document changes for National Assessment reporting groups. Many of the groups followed the national pattern: a decline between the first two assessments, followed by possible improvement between the second and third. However, the disadvantaged-urban and rural groups countered that trend by not declining between the first two assessments and by not showing any signs of improvement in 1978. The advantaged-urban group followed the national trend of a decline between 1969 and 1973, but improved

EXHIBIT 3–8. Group Changes in Percentages of "Rainy Day" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Cohesion, Age 13, 1969 to 1973 and 1973 to 1978

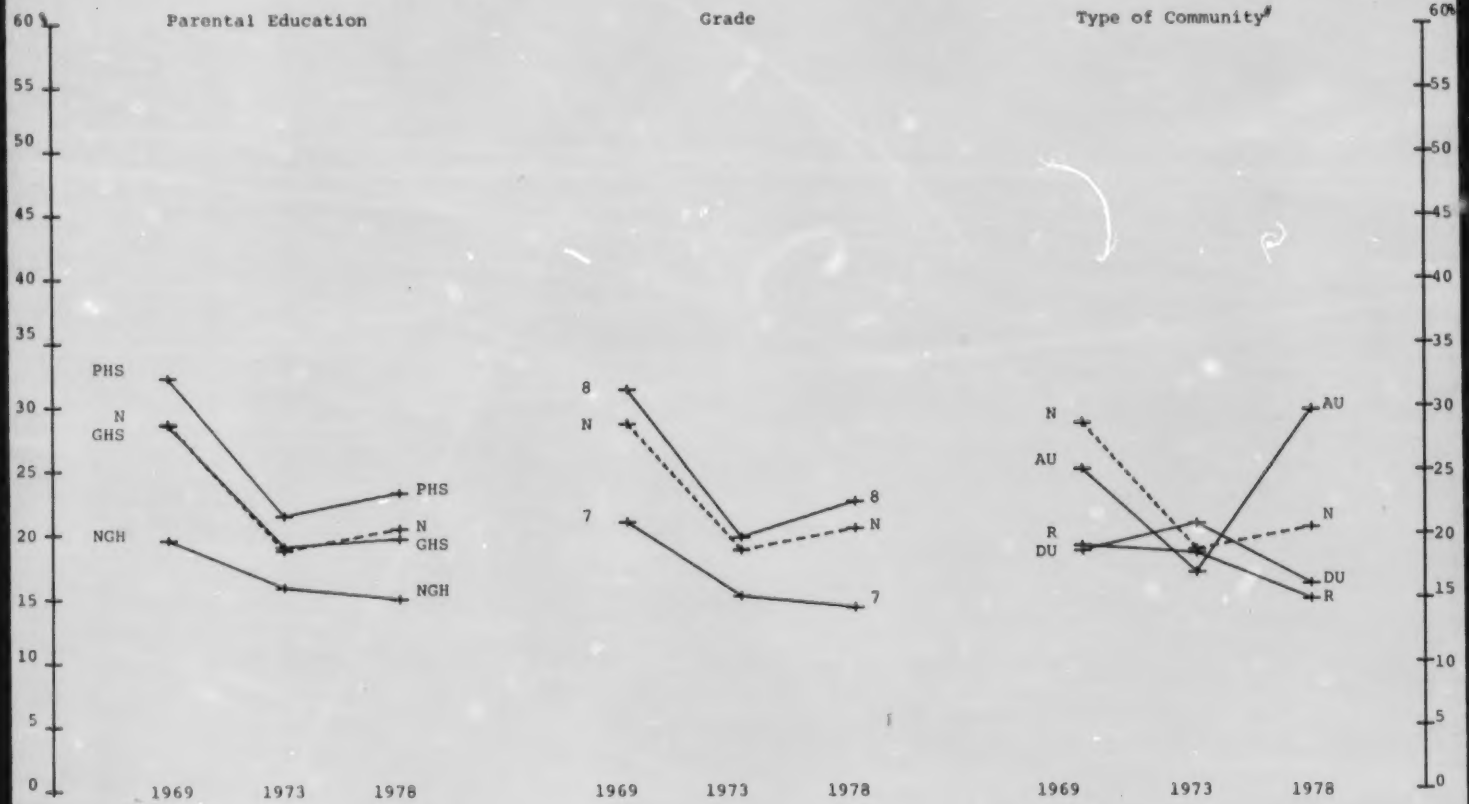


	1969	1973	1978
NE	30.5%	21.8%	25.2%
W	20.5	19.2	20.8
C	35.6	18.5	17.8
SE	25.4	15.2	18.0
N	28.7	18.8	20.5

	1969	1973	1978
F	30.1%	19.5%	22.3%
M	27.2	18.1	18.6
N	28.7	18.8	20.5

	1969	1973	1978
W	30.7%	19.8%	20.5%
B	21.1	14.6	18.3
N	28.7	18.8	20.5

EXHIBIT 3–8 *(Continued).* **Group Changes in Percentages of "Rainy Day" Papers Rated 3 and 4, Cohesion, Age 13, 1969 to 1973 and 1973 to 1978**



	1969	1973	1978
PHS	32.3%	21.5%	23.3%
GHS	28.6	19.1	19.7
NGH	19.6	15.9	15.0
N	28.7	18.8	20.5

	1969	1973	1978
8	31.4%	19.8%	22.6%
7	21.0	15.2	14.3
N	28.7	18.8	20.5

	1969	1973	1978
AU	25.1%	17.0%	29.7%
R	19.1	18.5	14.9
DU	18.7	20.8	16.1
N	28.7	18.8	20.5

#*These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.*

TABLE 3-6. Percentages of 13-Year-Olds at Each Cohesion Score Level, "Rainy Day" Exercise, 1969, 1973, 1978†

Year	Score Point					
	Non-rateable	Inadequate	Attempts at Cohesion	Cohesion	Cohesion and Coherence	Cohesion or Better
	0	1	2	3	4	3 & 4
1969 (n = 2,408)	1.6%	15.6%	54.0%	26.0%	2.7%	28.7%
1973 (n = 2,621)	1.2	14.8	65.1	17.6	1.2	18.8
1978 (n = 2,804)	0.5	16.4	62.6	18.7	1.7	20.5
Change						
1969-73	-0.4	-0.8	11.1*	-8.4*	-1.4*	-9.8*
1973-78	-0.7	1.5	-2.5	1.2	0.5	1.6
1969-78	-1.1*	0.7	8.6*	-7.2*	-1.0	-8.2*

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

significantly (13 points) in the last assessment to the extent that their percentage of 3 and 4 papers may be even higher than it was a decade ago.

Blacks, as they did for rhetorical skills on the previous exercises discussed, improved their relative standing by moving from a significant 8 points below the nation in 1969 to a nonsignificant 2 points below.

To gain additional information about changes in coherence, the "Describe" papers were subjected to a different, but related, analysis. Following an older, less rigorous procedure, readers categorized paragraphs as coherent or incoherent (guidelines appear in Appendix A). Table 3-7 displays the results of this process for poor papers (rated 1 or 2 on the holistic scale) and good papers (rated 3 or 4), as well as for the nation. Two points emerge from the table.

TABLE 3-7. Average Percentages of Coherent Paragraphs, Good and Poor "Describe" Papers, Age 13, 1969, 1973, 1978†

	1969 (n = 395)	1973 (n = 420)	1978 (n = 536)	Change 1969-73	Change 1973-78	Change 1969-78
Nation	76.5%	77.7%	83.3%	1.2	5.6*	6.9*
Poor (1 & 2)	55.8	63.7	77.6	8.0	13.8*	21.8*
Good (3 & 4)	86.5	87.6	87.8	1.1	0.2	1.3

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

First, between 1969 and 1978, there was an increase in the national percentage of coherent paragraphs, most of which took place between the second and third assessments.

Second, the improvement in national performance is mainly attributable to improved coherence in the poorer papers. The poor and good writers differed by 31 points in 1969, but by only 10 points in 1978. It might be argued that the poor writers had much more room for improvement, and so they did. But it is still a positive de-

velopment that they were able to improve so much in so short a time.

2. Syntax

Both the "Rainy Day" and the "Describe" papers were examined to see if there were any changes over the nine years in the numbers and types of sentences in the papers.

Table 3-8 displays some characteristics of the papers including length and proportions of sentence types. The 1978 papers were significantly shorter in both cases, containing fewer words and fewer sentences than the 1969 papers. Average sentence length was comparable for the two exercises, ranging from 15-18 words, and appeared relatively stable across time. Average word length—four letters—was identical for both sets of papers in the different years. But, there the similarity ends. The expressive and descriptive papers were comprised of quite different proportions of simple and complex sentences. The former contained, on the average, 28% simple sentences (down from 33% in 1969), while the latter contained 47%. Conversely, half the sentences in the expressive papers were complex, compared with one-fourth of the sentences in the descriptive papers, probably because the expressive task encouraged complex constructions. They also differed markedly in their proportions of sentences with phrases, a crude indicator of modification or embedding; the descriptive essay contained almost twice as many.

Such contrasts reflect differences in the way people respond to various writing assignments and differences in expressive and explanatory discourse. In addition, they probably indicate that 13-year-olds were more likely to elaborate upon things than upon feelings, a preference that may also explain why the descriptive papers are twice as long.

The remainder of the sentences in both papers (about 12-21%) were run-on sentences and fragments. These, along with other errors such as awkwardness, spelling and word choice, are discussed shortly under mechanics. The figures discussed here cannot tell us much about quality. Rather they are useful for describing the great range and variety in the papers and the relative stability of such distributions and proportions across time for particular writing tasks.

Table 3-9 uses terms that are perhaps less familiar to general readers. Most research on syntax or sentence forms is done in terms of the "T-unit" instead of the sentence in order to examine the amount and kind of modification and embellishment writers use. Subordination skills—the processes by which writers embed information in their sentences—have been shown to develop in writers as they mature, enabling older and better writers to convey more information more efficiently. Syntax analysts use the T-unit—an independent clause and all its modifying words, phrases and clauses—because it enables them to focus upon embedding more precisely than the sentence. This approach takes into account subordination and coordination between words, phrases and subordinate clauses. It does not take into account coordination between main clauses—the tendency to string T-units together rather than embed information. The table tells us that, in 1978, the average expressive paper contained about six T-units—that is, six separate independent subject-verb constructions or statements. This is close to the number of sentences (five), but indicates an average of one sentence per paper was compound or run-on (a string of independent clauses).

The first point to note from Table 3-9 is that the average number of words per T-unit and the average amount of subordinations and intra-T-unit coordinations per T-unit have not changed over the three assessments. The average number of words per clause appears to have decreased but that seems to be because the 1969 sample pool contained a few more papers with unusually long clauses, inflating the average. A second point is that the average total subordination and intra-T-unit coordination (2.3 in 1978) tells us that in each T-unit there were embedded two pieces of information that were not part of the basic (kernel) subject-verb predication. This was largely done through subordination (1.9).

There are two ways to look at subordination: in terms of the units used (clauses, phrases or words) and in terms of the way those units function (as nouns, adjectives or adverbs). The table indicates

TABLE 3-8. Means and Percentiles for Characteristics of Expressive and Descriptive Papers, Age 13, 1969, 1973, 1978†

	1969					1973					1978					Mean Change 1969-78
	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	
Expressive ("Rainy Day")																
# sentences/essay	5	3	4	6	9	5	3	4	6	9	5	3	4	6	8	-0.6*
# words/essay	77	46	67	96	127	76	48	71	97	127	73	48	68	96	126	-4.2
Avg. # words/sentence	17	12	15	21	28	18	12	15	20	28	17	12	15	21	29	0.4
Avg. # letters/word	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	-0.0
% minor sentences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-0.2
% simple sentences	33	0	30	50	67	28	0	29	50	63	28	0	25	50	60	-4.9*
% compound sentences	7	0	0	11	25	5	0	0	0	20	6	0	0	0	25	-0.7
% complex sentences	49	25	50	67	100	54	33	50	75	100	53	33	50	75	100	3.4
% simple sentences with phrases	10	0	0	17	33	9	0	0	17	33	9	0	0	17	33	-1.4
% complex sentences with phrases	19	0	13	33	50	20	0	16	33	50	20	0	17	33	50	1.6
Number of respondents			589					630					680			
Descriptive ("Describe")																
# sentences/essay	11	6	10	14	19	9	5	8	12	16	9	5	8	12	17	-1.2*
# words/essay	145	78	127	194	260	127	75	114	164	216	122	73	112	158	212	-22.8*
Avg. # words/sentence	16	11	14	17	22	17	11	13	17	27	15	11	13	17	22	-0.3
Avg. # letters/word	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	-0.0
% minor sentences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-0.1
% simple sentences	47	30	47	67	83	45	25	46	64	78	47	29	50	64	79	-0.6
% compound sentences	6	0	0	13	21	7	0	0	11	25	6	0	0	11	20	-0.1
% complex sentences	31	12	27	46	60	24	6	22	36	50	26	10	25	41	51	-4.2*
% simple sentences with phrases	34	19	33	50	62	31	14	31	44	60	33	17	33	48	60	-1.7
% complex sentences with phrases	25	6	20	38	54	19	0	16	31	43	21	0	19	33	50	-4.1*
Number of respondents			395					420					536			

Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Figures for means and percentiles have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

TABLE 3-9. Means and Percentiles for Number of T-Units and T-Unit Constituents, Expressive Papers, Age 13, 1969, 1973, 1978†

	1969					1973					1978					Mean Change 1969-78
	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	
# T-units/essay	6.6	4.0	6.0	8.0	11.0	6.4	4.0	6.0	8.0	11.0	6.1	4.0	6.0	8.0	11.0	-0.51
Avg. # words/T-unit	12.9	9.5	11.8	15.0	19.0	12.8	9.9	12.1	15.0	18.7	12.8	10.0	12.0	15.0	18.7	-0.10
Avg. # subordinations (esbedding)/T-unit	1.8	1.1	1.6	2.3	3.0	1.8	1.2	1.7	2.3	3.0	1.9	1.2	1.7	2.4	3.3	0.06
Avg. # subordinate clauses/T-unit	0.8	0.3	0.6	1.0	1.5	0.9	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.5	0.8	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.5	0.06
Avg. # words/clause	6.3	5.5	6.3	7.1	8.4	6.2	5.4	6.1	6.9	7.8	6.1	5.3	6.1	6.9	7.6	-0.24*
Avg. # nominalizations/T-unit	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.6	1.0	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.7	1.0	0.02
Avg. # adjectival (noun) modifications/T-unit	1.1	0.6	1.0	1.4	2.0	1.0	0.6	1.0	1.3	1.8	1.0	0.6	0.9	1.4	2.0	-0.04
Avg. # relative clauses/T-unit	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.7	-0.04
Avg. # adjectives/T-unit	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.7	1.0	0.00
Avg. # adverbial modifications/T-unit	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.5	1.0	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.6	1.0	0.08*
Avg. # intra-T-unit coordinations/T-unit	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.6	1.0	-0.03
Avg. # subordinations and intra-T-unit coordinations/T-unit	2.2	1.4	1.9	2.8	3.8	2.2	1.4	2.0	2.7	3.5	2.3	1.4	2.0	2.8	4.0	0.03
Number of respondents			589					630					680			

Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Figures for means and percentiles have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

that the functions were primarily adjectival (1.0) with some nominalizations (.5) and some adverbial modifications (.4). In 1978, half the units were clauses (.8), with the remainder being phrases (.2) and words (.6).

These numbers will mean more to linguists than to the general reader. The important lessons to be drawn from Table 3-9 are these:

- These syntactic features of the NAEP papers have remained stable over nine years, indicating that there have been no major changes in the amount of embedding the teenagers do in their writing.

- The average paper is rather perfunctory, linking subjects, verbs and objects without much modification or elaboration.

An extensive report on the full syntactic analysis of these papers will appear at a later date.

3. Mechanics

Over the years, the term "mechanics" has come to be associated with error counts. Errors may be indicators of unlearned skills, of course, but they may also be indicators of growth. By themselves, errors do not tell us much; in the context of a particular paper, a particular pattern and a particular student, they have great diagnostic value. The error counts displayed in this report are being used in a purely descriptive way. We are less interested in the counts *per se* than in the patterns they suggest and the changes they undergo over the years.

Table 3-10 presents average error counts for an expressive task (the "Rainy Day" papers discussed earlier) and a descriptive task (the "Describe" papers discussed earlier). The most obvious pattern in the table is that most of the numbers increase between the first and second assessments, then decrease or level off between the second and the third. Regardless of the statistical significance of any one figure, it is noteworthy that almost all the 1973-78 changes are negative, indicating a trend toward a lower error rate.

Looking at the overall error pattern from 1969 to 1978, there appears to have been a slight increase in some errors, a slight decrease or no change in others, with the net impression being that the error rate is relatively stable, particularly for the expressive exercises. The descriptive papers did appear to contain a somewhat larger percentage of errors in 1978 than in 1969. Coupled with that, the slight increases in fragments and run-ons for both papers, and the large proportion of awkward sentences (about one in four) might be some cause for concern.

Differences between the expressive and descriptive essays do not seem particularly great. Looking at the 1978 figure, one sees that in both, the average percentage of fragments is around 5%, the percentage of awkward sentences is 23-25%, the percentage of spelling errors around 4-5% and there are about three punctuation errors per paper. For both papers, the bulk of punctuation errors were errors of omission, primarily of commas. The descriptive papers did contain twice the proportion of sentences with agreement errors—11%, compared with 5% for the expressive papers. Both were relatively free of capitalization errors and word-choice errors.

Table 3-11 offers another view of errors by presenting the values of their distribution at the first quartile (25% made this many or fewer errors and 75% made this many errors or more), the median (half made this many or fewer errors and half made this many errors or more), the third quartile (75% made this many or fewer errors and 25% made this many or more errors) and the 90th percentile (the most error-prone 10% of the students made at least this many errors). The table dramatizes the extent to which a very small proportion of the students accounted for the lion's share of the errors. The writing of the least error-prone 25% contained very few errors, and half the students did not show many problems, with the possible exception of sentence construction. But 10-25% of the youngsters appear to be having a terrible time with errors.

The major problems for the majority of students are apparently punctuation, spelling and awkward sentences—three things that present no problems when we speak to one another but come into importance whenever we write.

TABLE 3-10. Average Frequency and Changes in Average Frequency of Errors in Expressive and Descriptive Papers, Age 13, 1969, 1973, 1978†

	1969		1973		1978		Change 1969-73		Change 1973-78		Change 1969-78	
	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %
Expressive ("Rainy Day")												
Sentence fragments	0.2	3.5	0.2	3.8	0.2	4.5	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.9
Run-on sentences	0.2	6.6	0.3	8.5	0.3	7.7	0.1	1.9	-0.0	-0.8	0.1	1.1
Awkward sentences	1.2	27.6	1.3	31.6	1.1	25.2	0.2	4.0	-0.3*	-6.4*	-0.1	-2.4
Faulty parallelism	0.3	7.3	0.3	8.3	0.2	6.0	0.0	1.0	-0.1*	-2.3*	-0.0	-1.3
Unclear pronoun reference	0.0	0.9	0.1	0.9	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	-0.0*	-0.7*	-0.0	-0.6*
Illogical constructions	0.2	4.1	0.1	1.8	0.0	0.5	-0.1*	-2.3*	-0.0*	-1.3*	-0.1*	-3.6*
Other dysfunctional constructions	0.7	15.3	0.9	20.6	0.8	18.5	0.2*	5.3*	-0.1	-2.1	0.1	3.1
Capitalization errors	0.3	--	0.4	--	0.4	--	0.1	--	0.0	--	0.1	--
Misspelled words	2.4	3.7	2.9	4.2	2.5	3.7	0.5*	0.5	-0.4	-0.5	0.1	0.1
Word-choice errors	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.2*	0.1	-0.1	-0.1	0.0	0.1
Sentences with agreement errors	0.2	4.5	0.3	6.5	0.2	5.4	0.1	2.0*	-0.1	-1.1	0.0	0.9
Total punctuation errors	3.1	--	3.2	--	3.0	--	0.1	--	-0.2	--	-0.1	--
Comma errors	2.1	--	2.0	--	1.8	--	-0.1	--	-0.2	--	-0.3	--
Endmark errors	0.3	9.6	0.5	13.2	0.4	9.1	0.1	3.6	-0.1	-4.1*	0.0	-0.6
Number of respondents	589		630		680							
Descriptive ("Describe")												
Sentence fragments	0.3	3.3	0.3	5.1	0.4	5.5	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.4	0.1	2.2*
Run-on sentences	0.8	12.4	1.0	18.6	0.9	15.2	0.2	6.2*	-0.1	-3.4*	0.1	2.8
Awkward sentences	1.8	20.2	2.3	31.0	1.7	22.6	0.5*	10.8*	-0.6*	-8.4*	-0.1	2.4
Capitalization errors	0.7	--	1.3	--	1.2	--	0.6*	--	-0.1	--	0.5*	--
Misspelled words	5.0	4.1	5.4	4.9	5.4	4.9	0.4	0.7	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.8*
Word-choice errors	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6	-0.0	0.0	-0.2	-0.1	-0.2	-0.1
Sentences with agreement errors	0.9	11.8	1.0	15.1	0.9	11.2	0.1	3.3	-0.1	-3.9*	-0.0	-0.7
Total punctuation errors	3.4	--	3.4	--	3.4	--	0.0	--	-0.0	--	-0.0	--
Comma errors	2.8	--	2.5	--	2.5	--	-0.3	--	0.0	--	-0.3	--
Endmark errors	0.5	6.1	0.5	9.3	0.5	9.0	0.0	3.2*	0.0	-0.3	0.1	[illegible]
Number of respondents	395		420		536							

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Figures may not total due to rounding error.

TABLE 3-11. Means and Percentiles for Errors in Expressive and Descriptive Papers, Age 13, 1969, 1973, 1978†

	1969					1973					1978					Mean Change 1969-78
	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	Mean	Q1	Median	Q3	90th	
Expressive ("Rainy Day")																
% sentence fragments	4	0	0	0	17	4	0	0	0	20	4	0	0	0	20	0.9
% run-on sentences	7	0	0	0	33	9	0	0	0	33	8	0	0	0	33	1.1
% awkward sentences	28	0	25	50	100	32	0	29	50	83	25	0	22	43	67	-2.4
# capitalization errors	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
% misspelled words	4	1	3	6	10	4	1	3	6	11	4	0	3	5	9	0.1
% word-choice errors	1	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	2	3	0.1
% sentences with agreement errors	5	0	0	9	25	7	0	0	0	29	5	0	0	0	25	0.9
# total punctuation errors	3	1	2	4	6	3	1	3	4	7	3	1	2	4	6	-0.1
Number of respondents			589					630					680			
Descriptive ("Describe")																
% sentence fragments	3	0	0	0	13	5	0	0	0	17	6	0	0	0	15	2.2*
% run-on sentences	12	0	0	17	45	19	0	8	27	57	15	0	6	25	50	2.8
% awkward sentences	20	0	15	33	50	31	13	25	44	67	23	6	19	33	50	2.4
# capitalization errors	1	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	2	4	1	0	0	1	4	0.5*
% misspelled words	4	2	3	6	10	5	2	3	6	11	5	2	4	7	11	0.8*
% word-choice errors	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	-0.1
% sentences with agreement errors	12	0	5	17	38	15	0	7	22	40	11	0	0	17	33	-0.7
# total punctuation errors	3	1	2	5	7	3	1	2	4	7	3	1	3	5	8	-0.0
Number of respondents			395					420					536			

Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†*Figures for means and percentiles have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

Tables D-1 and D-2 in Appendix D present results for error counts for good and poor writers defined by holistic, primary trait and cohesion ratings. Poor writers, defined by holistic or primary trait ratings, seem to have much more trouble with punctuation than good writers. The papers rated 1 and 2 contained greater proportions of fragments, run-ons and punctuation errors than the papers rated 3 and 4. The poor papers also contained twice the percentage of misspelled words and sentences with agreement errors. Papers rated 1 and 2 on cohesion did not appear to have appreciably more errors than those rated 3 and 4.

Table D-3 shows error counts for males, females, blacks and whites. Males appear to make more errors than females, with the exception of punctuation. For some reason (perhaps because they wrote longer and more complex papers), girls made more comma errors.

Black youngsters also made more errors, as a group, than the national population of 13-year-olds. However, some of these errors—especially the agreement problems—may be due to bidialectal interference that, once recognized, can be dealt with effectively in an instructional situation. In addition, there appears to be a slight improvement in the blacks' error rate since the last assessment, consistent with the improvements we have noted in rhetorical skills.

C. Writing Experiences and Attitudes

Besides actually writing, the 13-year-olds also answered a number of questions about how much writing they do, what kinds of instruction they have had and how they feel about writing. The questions appear in Appendix E. The results (Table 3-12 and appendix Tables E-1 and E-2) prompt the following observations:

- One 13-year-old in six reported having been assigned no writing during the six weeks prior to assessment. Half reported doing two or fewer writing assignments.

- Forty-four percent reported that little or no English class time is devoted to writing instruction. Three-quarters said the amount of instruction is one-third of the class time or less.

- Forty-one percent of the students said they are usually encouraged to jot down ideas or make notes before writing a paper.

- Twenty-eight percent said they are usually encouraged to make outlines before writing.

- Forty-one percent said they usually write at least one draft before turning a paper in.

- A quarter of the students said their teachers usually give them written suggestions about how to improve their writing when the teachers hand back corrected papers.

- About a third of the students said their teachers usually discuss their papers with them.

- Few students (14%) said they try to improve papers that have been returned.

- Very few (3%) students said they engage in the full writing process from prewriting activities through improving work after receiving written or oral feedback from their teachers.

- More 13-year-olds said they never enjoy writing in school (26%) than said they usually enjoy it (20%).

- More poor writers than good writers claimed to have written no reports, said they never draft their papers and said they never enjoy writing.

- More good writers than poor writers said they were doing some prewriting, they were drafting papers before turning them in, their teachers discussed their papers with them and they usually enjoyed writing.

- Males, students whose parents lack a high school education, disadvantaged-urban students and black youngsters appeared to be doing less prewriting and drafting and receiving less teacher help.

TABLE 3-12. Responses to Background Questions, Age 13, 1978

	1978 (n = 29,430)
1. How many reports written in last 6 weeks as part of any school assignment?	
0	16.4%
1	16.4
2	17.1
3	12.9
4	8.6
5-10	17.2
More than 10	3.6
2. Time spent in English class on instruction in writing?	
None of the time	8.8
Little of the time	30.3
1/3 of the time	31.4
1/2 of the time	15.3
Most of the time	8.3
3. Encouraged to jot down ideas and make notes before writing?	
Usually	40.9
Sometimes	47.1
Never	10.9
4. Encouraged to create outlines?	
Usually	27.5
Sometimes	46.4
Never	24.4
Encouraged to prewrite: notes or outlines or both	52.0
Neither notes nor outlines	47.0
Either notes or outlines	35.6
Both notes and outlines	16.4
5. Do you draft papers more than once before turning them in?	
Usually	40.6
Sometimes	45.5
Never	13.9
6. Does teacher write suggestions on paper?	
Usually	26.3
Sometimes	56.1
Never	17.5
7. Does teacher discuss papers with you?	
Usually	31.2
Sometimes	52.6
Never	16.2
Teacher feedback: written suggestions or discussion or both	47.5
Neither written suggestions nor discussion	52.4
Either written suggestions or discussion	37.3
Both written suggestions and discussion	10.2
8. Do you work to improve papers after they are returned?	
Usually	13.7
Sometimes	50.5
Never	35.7

TABLE 3-12 *Continued*. Responses to Background Questions, Age 13, 1978

9. Do you enjoy working on writing assignments?	
Usually	20.4
Sometimes	53.6
Never	26.1
Summary of writing as a process: prewrite, draft, feedback, work to improve	
None	17.0
At least one	83.0
At least two	51.4
At least three	19.8
All four	3.3

The teenagers were also asked to respond to 12 attitudinal questions (Appendix Table E-3). Given a statement such as "I am no good at writing," they could strongly agree, agree, say they were uncertain, disagree or strongly disagree. The results were quite consistent. Whenever they were presented with a positively worded statement, about 5 or 6 youngsters in 10 would agree (strongly or otherwise), while 2 or 3 in 10 would disagree. Whenever they were presented with a negatively worded statement, the reverse happened: 3 in 10 would agree, while 5 or 6 disagreed. This would indicate that in the average classroom of 30 pupils, about 15 to 18 are likely to have a generally positive attitude toward writing, 5 or 6 are likely to be uncertain and a half dozen or more are likely to have little confidence in their writing ability and negative attitudes toward the activity.

The attitudinal questions also revealed that:

- A large majority of the students (76%) said they write for other reasons besides school.
- Twelve percent agreed to the statement that "when I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly."
- Fifteen percent said they avoid writing.
- Seventeen percent said they expect to do poorly in composition classes before they even take them.
- Eighteen percent agreed to the statement that "expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time."
- Twenty-nine percent said they were afraid of writing essays when they knew they would be evaluated.

These results suggest that there is considerable work to be done simply addressing the attitudes of youngsters toward the act of writing.

CHAPTER 4

AN OVERVIEW OF THE WRITING OF 9-YEAR-OLDS, 13-YEAR-OLDS AND 17-YEAR-OLDS

This volume presents writing assessment results for a single age group; parallel results for the other two age groups appear in the other two volumes of the report. However, in order to put the results in this volume into perspective, it is useful to look at general results for all three ages.

On holistic ratings, the 17-year-olds do not show a statistically significant change over the decade for a descriptive task. There are some signs, however, that the average quality of their writing is somewhat lower than it was. The 13-year-olds display a significant decline in descriptive writing, though it appears that much of it took place between the first two assessments and the quality has stayed about the same since then. The 9-year-olds do not show a statistically significant change on a narrative task, but there are indications that the overall quality of their work has improved with each assessment. These holistic results suggest two things. First, since changes in overall writing quality are basically undramatic for any particular age group, realizing changes in such a complex skill may be a slow process. It may take many more assessments to establish the impact of educational instruction on writing performance. Second, what one says about the situation of writing in America depends upon which level of the educational system one is interested in. The differing trends in the data suggest that primary school, junior high school and high school constitute somewhat separate targets for policy action in the area of writing. Generalizations from one age to another appear to be inappropriate.

The results for writing tasks calling for different types of rhetorical or communicative approaches provide further cause for caution in making global comments about writing. At ages 17 and 13, expressive writing skills are improving or remaining at the same level, while persuasive and descriptive writing skills appear to be declining. At age 9, there have been ups and downs in expressive writing, depending on the task, but persuasive writing skills appear stable.

Error analysis does not reveal many major changes in the commission of certain errors over a decade's time at any age. Awkwardness seems to fluctuate a bit from assessment to assessment, as do punctuation and spelling errors. But the range of fluctuation seems small and the data suggest that at each age there will always be errors in writing of this kind. Even more stable than the error proportions are the results of syntactic analysis. The embedding rates and various indices of subordination and coordination remained identical or very similar at ages 13 and 17 from assessment to assessment. This is largely so at age 9, but some indicators do reflect a bit of growth over the decade.

Although all three age groups did not perform the same writing tasks, it is clear that more 13-year-olds demonstrated writing skill than 9-year-olds and more 17-year-olds did than 13-year-olds. There is progress from age to age and from grade to grade.

On the other hand, enjoyment of writing seems to decline from age to age. Two-thirds of the 9-year-olds said they enjoy writing, compared to 59% of the 13-year-olds and 53% of the 17-year-olds.

Group results and changes in them were quite consistent across the three ages. Females wrote more good papers than males in all assessments at each age and for all but one task. The male/female difference did not change appreciably for any age group.

Black youngsters improved either absolutely or relatively on almost all writing tasks given to 13- and 17-year-olds and one task given to 9-year-olds. In some cases this meant that they continued to perform below the national level, but not as far below as they had been in 1969 or 1970; in other cases, this meant that they performed at the national level after once having been below it.

At age 17, the disadvantaged-urban group made steady gains over the decade. At age 13, the group stayed below the national level or fell even farther behind. Nine-year-olds in the disadvantaged-urban group closed the gap between themselves and the nation on one expressive writing task but remained at a constant level below the nation on the rest.

At all three ages, it appears that a considerable proportion of young people—from 10 to 25%—do not understand the nature and conventions of written language. In an earlier NAEP report, *Writing Mechanics, 1969-74* (1975), we noted that the gap between the writing "haves" and the "have nots" seemed to be widening. The more comprehensive data available now do not indicate that the gap is widening. They do indicate, however, that it has not closed appreciably at any age.

Finally, it is clear from the background questions that neither 13-year-olds nor 17-year-olds receive a great deal of direct instruction in writing or are required to do much writing in school. Very few appear to have access to a writing program that includes prewriting instruction, oral and written feedback on writing assignments, encouragement to write several drafts of papers and opportunities to rework papers after they have been reviewed by teachers.

CHAPTER 5

SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT WRITING IN AMERICA, THE ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESULTS FOR INSTRUCTION

In order to put the assessment findings into perspective and stimulate discussion of the issues they raise, the National Assessment invited five nationally prominent individuals to discuss and interpret the data. Participating in two days of lively conversation about the subject were:

V. Jon Bentz, Director of Psychological Research and Services, National Personnel Department, Sears, Roebuck and Company, Chicago, Illinois. In addition to his interest in writing and assessment from a corporate point of view, Mr. Bentz has been a member of two boards of education and the Policy Committee of the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Beverly Bimes, English teacher, Hazelwood Schools, Missouri. Ms. Bimes is a Title I consultant, Gateway Writing Project consultant, Presidential Scholar Commissioner and 1980 National Teacher of the Year.

Charlotte Brooks, writing teacher, author, editor, education consultant and past President of the National Council of Teachers of English.

John Mellon, linguist, author and Chairman of the Program in English Composition. University of Illinois at Chicago Circle.

Richard Lloyd-Jones, Chairman, Department of English, University of Iowa; past President of the Conference on College Communication and Composition; Chair, Modern Languages Association Division on the Teaching of Writing; and Associate Director, Iowa-National Endowment for the Humanities Institute on Writing.

All present felt it was important for readers of this report to understand the National Assessment data and the social and educational contexts within which writing instruction takes place before rushing to conclusions about what these results might mean. After establishing this contextual framework, the panel discussed at length the significance of the trends and their implications for teachers of writing. Their opinions are theirs alone and do not necessarily represent either the views of the institutions with which they are affiliated or those of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the Education Commission of the States or the National Institute of Education.

Assessment Data in Perspective

All participants wished to emphasize the fact that the writing upon which this report is based was first-draft writing gathered under timed assessment conditions. Such writing is likely to understate youngsters' abilities to develop fully their ideas and smooth out their writing through subsequent drafts.

In addition, some of the assignments are necessarily artificial and may understate the writers' capacities to do a better job in a "real world" or school situation when real stakes are involved.

John Mellon stressed the point that NAEP data are descriptive, not normative. "It's easy to think something's wrong when performance is down," he said, "but it's not necessarily the case. It's really hard to tell what these ups and downs mean until we've got 50 years of them. Then, maybe

we'll see that they smooth out to a relatively straight line. In the meantime, I prefer to view the results as descriptions of something complex and, except in extreme cases—or instances when we have other kinds of data to bring to bear—withhold judgment until we have a better idea of what we can reasonably expect the results should be in a society like ours."

Richard Lloyd-Jones speculated about what kinds of changes would most likely affect national indicators such as these data: "Crises in the society as a whole may show up in a sample of writing quickly because they may affect the incentives students feel to perform well in these circumstances. Long-term changes in society may show up less quickly and dramatically in data of this kind. Changes caused by classroom practices would show up slowly, if at all, because the teachers remain essentially the same, the time devoted (or not devoted) to writing remains relatively stable and instructional materials remain much the same for long periods of time. By and large, the most likely causes of changes in assessment data will be large social movements that affect large subgroups of people—such as integration, for instance—rather than curricular or instructional movements, which tend to cancel each other out across the nation as a whole."

The Social Context of Writing

Like many commentators upon contemporary education, the participants in this discussion stressed the degree to which sociocultural factors can influence achievement in a subject such as writing. People perfect their language skills in oral practice, mostly outside of school. Because writing is derived from that base, it tends to reflect whatever is part of general public practice. In addition, if the culture at large seems to accord little importance to writing or to writing well; if professional writing is not generally held in high esteem; or if social upheavals affect opportunities to learn, practice or value any of the many skills involved in writing, then we should not be surprised if achievement appears, sometimes, lower than we think it should be.

Jon Bentz believes that society has been valuing writing less and less in the last two decades. "Everything is computerized, quantified, visual or audio," he said. "Respect for, or even interest in, the written word is on the decline. And the art of conversation, of interchanging thoughts, appears to be passing, or at least changing in character. In our McLuhanesque world, fewer people reason, while more make demands and pronouncements. Television, primarily a passive experience, reduces the need for imagination and interaction, both of which are critical for good writing."

In response to the declines in the proportion of youngsters demonstrating effective persuasive writing, Lloyd-Jones speculated that we might be witnessing a consequence of the "Me" generation. "Persuasive writing requires a highly developed social sense," he said, "an ability to imagine other peoples' needs and priorities in order to address them. Perhaps we're seeing a decline in the proportions of youngsters able to imagine other people or experiences outside of a very narrow range of self interests."

Beverly Bimes added the observation that "if the social experience of argument is weak or shabby, it's hard to see how our students could learn good argument or persuasion."

All agreed that writing is a complex and difficult skill, requiring considerable motivation to learn and numerous good models to learn well. Social changes that affect motivation or the availability of models will affect the number of young people who learn to write well.

Mellon mixed some advice about society's expectations with a speculation about the slight decline in overall quality at age 17 and the larger decline at age 13. "It may be that, as Piaget remarked, Americans are too concerned with the speed at which their children develop," he said. "Perhaps we're seeing a slight slowing down of what we used to think of as the 'normal' developmental schedule. The skills will come eventually, but they're coming a little slower than they used to, that's all. A complex social change could conceivably delay the cognitive or emotional development of a particular generation in some respects, while speeding it up in other respects."

The Educational Context of Writing

The discussants were in general agreement that

a number of the characteristics of American mass education and a number of educational trends combine to constitute a less-than-ideal environment for the teaching and learning of writing. Among the features of our educational system that make effective writing instruction difficult, they cited these as prominent:

- Writing requires considerable one-to-one teacher/student and student/student interaction, while our system is geared to instructing large groups. Furthermore, class size continues to grow, not shrink, making individual attention nearly impossible.

- Writing instruction is considered to be the responsibility only of English teachers. Thus, an activity that should pervade instruction in all subjects is relegated to a small part of a student's day and severed from general learning. Furthermore, many teachers deprive students of writing opportunities by giving multiple-choice and short-answer tests and shying away from essays.

- Many people teaching English were trained in other subject areas and know little or nothing about writing.

- Too many people trained to teach English still have had little or no training in composition or writing.

- Many English teachers see themselves as literature teachers, not writing teachers. When they do teach writing, they tend to focus upon the products of writing, rather than the process.

- Writing requires practice, but most teachers feel they do not have the time to read and critique all the papers that would be written if their students were practicing as they should be. Consequently, less writing is assigned than should be.

In addition to these general problems, which have a long history, the discussants also cited several more recent trends in education that do not auger well for writing instruction. Charlotte Brooks criticized a "lock-step" approach to learning that has become increasingly popular with the minimal competency movement and tighter education budgets. "Writing is not something a child can learn a little piece at a time," she said. "So many of these competency programs break reading and writing up into bits: first, you master the alphabet, then you master words, then you can go on to sentences, and so on. The child seldom gets to see the larger picture, seldom gets the freedom to explore with language and take risks."

Bimes said, "I think the basics movement has been detrimental in many ways to writing. Too often, what's basic turns out to be mechanics and grammar, not writing. And expressive writing, which *is* basic, is seen as a frill. We have to remember that a writer has feelings and a writer has a mind. To deny either of those is to deny a student the possibility of becoming a writer at all."

Bentz saw budgetary cutbacks as more threatening to writing than to other subjects. "The cutbacks in my state generally mean the schools lose the paraprofessionals and readers who help writing teachers with their paper load," he said. "They also cut into the conference time teachers need with their students."

All agreed that publishers represent a conservative force in the teaching of writing. It is very difficult to get publishers to incorporate new ideas into their writing textbooks, they argued, because the publishers are afraid to take economic risks in today's tight market. Consequently, major textbooks have not changed for decades, in spite of a virtual explosion of useful research and practical information in the field of writing.

"I think we should remember that a lot of very positive things have been happening in the schools since the late 60s," Brooks reminded the group. "It hasn't been a totally negative period for writing. We've had the Right to Read program, and where it has been done well, it has helped writing, too. I don't like to separate reading and writing, because they feed each other. And we've had the Poets in the Schools Program and the various humanities programs that expose students to writers and scholars. These have been very successful where they've been used. And some schools have begun to follow the example of England with Writing Across the Curriculum programs. I've seen these work in England and

they're tremendously impressive."

"We've seen writing labs, too," Bimes added. "And a mushrooming of programs modeled after the Bay Area Writing Project. It may be that these developments are too recent to affect the 1979 writing assessment, but we might see some impact in the next assessment, if they continue to spread and escape cutbacks."

Comments About the National Results

The discussants were asked whether they thought the percentages of competent papers for each exercise and at each age were lower than they would like, higher or about what they might have expected. In general, they felt that the achievement levels were satisfactory, given the social and educational environments of writing in the last decade. They were, however, disappointed with the results for the persuasive writing, especially at ages 13 and 17. And, as might be expected, they felt there was some room for improvement on every exercise.

Lloyd-Jones pointed out that in the papers written for each assessment, there were "some astonishing papers—any reader would be pleased and challenged by them. Even though they write under restraints of limited time, artificial tasks and no external reward," he said, "some writers far exceeded any reasonable expectation."

Most writers, the group felt, produced "reasonably adequate first drafts for their age." The average paper needs revision, they pointed out, and it falls short of effective or powerful writing; but it represents material a teacher ought to be able to help students refine to a perfectly acceptable level. The potential of the majority of writers is obvious.

However, the group was strongly disappointed by the consistent reminders in the data that 10 to 25, and sometimes 30%, of the youngsters at each age have extremely serious problems with writing that call for special attention. Although Lloyd-Jones estimated that half of the students in that group are probably there for reasons other than lack of competence (e.g., physical, psychological and social problems), everyone still felt the proportion of such youngstes is unacceptably high. "It's hard to imagine that one of a child's first instincts is to want to write," Bimes said. "In fact, children attempt to write before they even think about reading. What have we done to this natural desire in our children?"

What did the group think about the trends? No one believed the NAEP data support fears of a massive erosion of writing competence. They all observed that the holistic-scores decline at age 17 was slight—worth keeping an eye on but not sufficient to provoke great concern. They would have preferred to see an increase. They felt the age 13 decline was more dramatic, but they pointed out that most of it occurred between the first two assessments and things seem to have settled down since then. They were gratified to see improvement among the 9-year-olds and expressed hope that this would bode well for the future.

Bimes expressed concern about the low percentage of 17-year-olds who attempted to write a humorous paper. "It appears that students aren't given opportunities to use higher-level cognitive skills in their writing," she said. "Too many writing assignments simply become a way for students to regurgitate information instead of requiring them to generalize, analyze, synthesize, hypothesize or defend."

Comments About the Group Results

Brooks spoke for the entire group in saying, "I am enormously encouraged by the consistent growth demonstrated by black and urban-disadvantaged writers on most exercises. At all levels, it's clear that something has happened to help these youngsters write better. Although many of them have not yet reached a high level of writing competence, they obviously have a potential for improvement that educators, legislators and the public at large must recognize. There is competence where once people said there was none."

It was this improvement, coupled with the improvement of the Southeastern region on many exercises, that led the group to speculate that the assessment results may reflect the impact of a change in the national pattern of attention paid to

minority youngsters over the last decade and a half. "Something of that magnitude could well affect large groups such as the blacks, the urban-disadvantaged and the Southeastern youngsters," said Lloyd-Jones. Brooks agreed, noting that "there is no economic improvement in the inner city that I know of that could account for such an improvement."

Some Implications of the Results for Teaching

Responses to the background questions demonstrated to the group that too little writing is going on in the schools and too few students are being exposed to a comprehensive writing program. The fact that so few students appear to receive instruction in prewriting, oral and written feedback from teachers and encouragement to improve papers after they're handed back indicates, they said, that there is much work to be done in the schools.

"I think the results show a clear need for more writing laboratories in the schools," Bimes said. "But they also show a great need for professional development. Teachers need first to see themselves as professionals and then to participate more widely in the various workshops and inservice programs in writing that have begun to appear in the last five years. There's a lot of information out there that's just not reaching the teachers."

"Writing labs, yes," Brooks added, "but not remedial writing courses. I think 'remedial' courses that fragment language have not helped in reading and I'd hate to see us make the same mistake in writing. Too many remedial writing courses just teach grammar and don't give youngsters opportunities to work with whole pieces of writing."

"I'd like to see more emphasis placed on persuasive writing," Bentz said. "To me, that's critical to success outside of school." Brooks agreed: "I'd like to see not only more attention to persuasion, but more attention to complex thinking skills in general. In reading, I'd like to see more emphasis on inference and comprehension, because I think that would improve both reading and writing. They don't need to be taught separately and taught a piece at a time."

Speaking about the grammatical structures used by writers at the three ages, Mellon observed, "The amazing stability of the syntax counts over the 10-year period suggests that grammatical maturity is not affected by those cultural factors influencing other aspects of students' writing. It also means that there is no need to step up the amount of grammar teaching aimed at maturity of grammatical structures."

"The greater length of the 9-year-olds' essays shows a greater willingness to write," Mellon also remarked. "That's encouraging and we should take advantage of it."

"Writing begins with enjoyment," Bimes said. "Until we teach children to enjoy writing we're not going to make the improvements we could otherwise."

"We have a base to build on," Brooks pointed out, "the results show that. The raw material is certainly there, the skills are there for most youngsters. We can no longer assume that any group of kids is 'unteachable.'"

The group made a number of suggestions about classroom approaches that would help more youngsters learn to write. Among them were these:

- Get the 9-year-olds "hooked" on writing by assigning writing suitable to their age and interests. Help them build security and interest through expressive writing and then lead them toward more difficult modes gradually. Let them experience success.
- Build on the fact that all youngsters have a solid grasp of oral language. Use that base as a springboard for writing instruction.
- Have them write. No one can achieve success in a skill that is seldom practiced.
- Structure assignments so that writing becomes discovery instead of regurgitation.
- Establish places where students write freely and receive constructive feedback on what they write.

- Since 13-year-olds appear to have difficulty with abstraction, start them on concrete expression and then move them gradually toward generalizations until they are skilled at making generalizations supported with concrete details.

- Develop persuasive writing skills by developing a sense of audience. Have them practice writing for different audiences.

- Teach skills useful at each stage of the writing process: prewriting, composing and editing.

- Integrate writing into all activities—science, social studies, even mathematics. Writing is an important and very effective way of learning.

APPENDIX A

EXERCISES, DOCUMENTATION, SCORING GUIDES AND SAMPLE PAPERS

Appendix A contains exercises and information about them, such as the NAEP objectives they are designed to assess, the kinds of scoring National Assessment utilized with each one, the amount of time students were given to respond and the number of lines students had on which to write. Following each exercise are any scoring guides used for evaluating the responses, and following the guides are sample papers illustrating each score point.

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"Describe Something" Exercise

Everybody knows of something that is worth talking about. Maybe you know about a famous building like the Empire State Building in New York City or something like the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Or you might know a lot about the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City or the new sports stadium in Atlanta or St. Louis. Or you might be familiar with something from nature, like Niagara Falls, a gigantic wheat field, a grove of orange trees, or a part of a wide, muddy river like the Mississippi.

There is probably something you can describe. Choose something you know about. It may be something from around where you live, or something you have seen while traveling, or something you have studied in school. Think about it for a while and then write a description of what it looks like so that it could be recognized by someone who has read your description.

Name what you are describing and try to use your best writing.

WRITING TASK: Describe Something

NAEP #: 0-203012-13A-23

RHETORICAL MODE: Explanatory - Descriptive

OBJECTIVE: II. Demonstrates ability to write in response to a wide range of societal demands and obligations. Ability is defined to include correctness in usage, punctuation, spelling, and form or convention as appropriate to particular writing tasks, e.g., manuscripts, letters.

SUBOBJECTIVE: C. Scholastic

NAEP SCORING: Holistic
Paragraph Coherence
Syntax (Sentence Types) and Mechanics (see Appendix B)

AGE:	13	17
TOTAL TIME IN SECONDS:	1566	1563
NUMBER OF LINES:	p.1 - 4 p.2 - 25 p.3 - 22	p.1 - 4 p.2 - 25 p.3 - 22

HOLISTIC SCORING GUIDE
"DESCRIBE SOMETHING"
AGE 13

Score Point Categories:

Score of 4

These papers choose a single object and describe it with concrete, clear language. They contain considerable detail and substance, originality of language, and some sense of structure. There may be a few minor mechanical problems. They will often have focus.

Score of 3

These papers choose a single object and describe it clearly, though with less detail, originality, or focus than the 4 papers. There may be little sense of organization, but the object should be individualized and mechanical problems should be relatively minor (unless the paper is very strong).

Score of 2

These papers do describe something but are thin, general, and often very short and/or confused.

Score of 1

Papers scored as 1 are very brief, non-descriptive, and confused. They contain serious errors in syntax, diction, and mechanics.

Score of 0

No-response papers should be given to the Table Leader for scoring.

PARAGRAPH COHERENCE SCORING GUIDE
(Developed for the 1973-74 Writing Assessment)
"DESCRIBE SOMETHING"

Paragraph Level Scores

1. Paragraph Used -- The paragraph is visually discernible but is neither coherent nor developed. The writer indented, skipped a line, or stopped in the middle of the line and started back at the margin.

2. Paragraph Coherent -- The sentences are linked using transitions and/or other cohesive devices. The ideas are ordered and their relationship to each other is clear but the paragraph is in some sense underdeveloped. This category also includes paragraphs that are overdeveloped; that is, the writer incorporated at least two coherent paragraphs into one.

3. Paragraph Coherent and Developed -- The paragraph has an expressed or an implied topic which identifies and limits the main area of concern. Every sentence in the paragraph adds to or explains something about the main topic in a systematic manner.

NOTE: Papers that are illegible, copies of the stem, or lists of spelling words are designated as such and receive no further scoring.

SAMPLES

Holistic

Score Point 1

Apartments - They are being built by Emmons field in Ashland. They look by the layout that they are going to be somewhat looking like Heathmoore Apartments

* * * * *

New York Empires State Building is the biggest building in new york City. New York is the Best state in Town

Score Point 2

The thing I am going to describe what you have had like where we used to live. It was a trailer it was nice we had a garage with it we lived in the country. The trees were nice and the grass was green and the flowers were pretty. We had to move because our trailer was getting to small

* * * * *

Shea Statium - it is a place of sports like football and baseball. It's like a round bowl with seats around the statium and about 35 rows of seats. In baseball, over there. There is an infield and an outfield about 390 feet long. In the outfield football is played. After each season whether it is football or baseball, they change the field for that sport

Score Point 3

I have seen the Rocky Mountains. The Rocky Mountains were very big with clouds over top of mountains and lots of snow on them. While we were driving we saw many ski slopes, some were closed and other were open with many people on them. We saw many racks of ski's and boots. There were many chair lifts and Gondola's filled with people going up and down and down the slopes. There were many trees on the slopes with slopes cut threw them. We went by many streams and springs running down the mountains. There were many people out skating around on frozen ponds and lakes many were playing hokey. There were also many people out sledding on the snow. We saw lots of wildlife

* * * * *

Mentethe Creek - Mentethe is a small Creek near my House. It has many rocks and a fall. Near Mentethe there is a place called Mentethe Point. There are quite a few houses there which are mostly summer cottages.

If you are traveling to see Mentethe all you have to do is go down West Lake

(Continued)

road keep going past Wells Curtice till you see the creek. It goes right under the road and on into CANANDAIGUA LAKE.
The creek is A very nice place AND I go there A lot to catch minnows, and other small creatures. My father AND I go there to go smalt fishing.
I love the creek very much, and I do not know what I'd do without it.

Score Point 4

My house in the country, which looks so peaceful. It is a small wooden house and green in color. I always thought the color was odd. But now I know it was meant to be. That color it matches the fields of greenish-yellowish wheat, not yet ripe, the big oaks and pears trees that provide shade on sunny days. But out of all the things that the country has to enjoy the peacefulness most. We seldom see people and when they do its exciting to watch them go by. This wide open space don't be polluted as most other places are. You also have more privacy to do what you want and to get a chance to live a life of your own. Freedom is another thing they have where I live. Oh sure, there's freedom in other places too. But this freedom is very different than any other kind I know of and I love it. There are also wild animals you can try to tame if you have the heart to. Many people go hunting in the fields by my house. There guns shatter the stillness and peace that was once there. Why can't they leave nature alone if they're not trying to help it? I wouldn't be surprised if someday there won't be any wildlife left. Animals have just as much right to live as humans do.
Well, there are people who love their own things. I'm proud of my home and hope we never move. And if we do I hope it's just like this one.

* * * * *

On Hemlock the sand looks like most of it is very fluffy and white. I have never been anywhere where sand looks this way.
The water is beautiful, too. There are three different colors in it when you first walk into the water. It is clear as glass. Then you go a little further and the water gets green. Then the water gets very dark blue. The water is so clear all the way through that you can see little fish swimming around and lots of seashells. On the beach there were sand crabs. They were white and would only come out at night. In the morning you could see all kinds of tiny footprints on the sand where they had walked. There were also quite a few starfish and tiny hermit crabs. Sometimes when you went past the sandbar, crabs would pinch your feet.

(Continued)

"Rainy Day" Exercise

Pretend that when you got up this morning, you looked out the window and saw that it was raining. How did you feel?

Think for a while about the feelings you have on a rainy morning. Then write a composition telling how a rainy school morning makes you feel.

WRITING TASK: Rainy Day

NAEP #: 0-102015-13A-2

RHETORICAL MODE: Expressive

OBJECTIVE: I. Demonstrates ability in writing to reveal personal feelings and ideas.

SUBOBJECTIVE: B. Through the use of conventional modes of discourse

NAEP SCORING: Primary Trait: Expression of feelings through systematic elaboration of detail consonant with a mood and situation.

Cohesion

Syntax (T-unit Analysis and Sentence Types) and Mechanics (see Appendix B)

AGE: 13

TOTAL TIME IN SECONDS: 864

NUMBER OF LINES: p.1 - 15
p.2 - 24

TRAIT SCORING GUIDE
"RAINY DAY"

Rhetorical Mode: Expressive

Primary Trait: Expression of feelings through systematic elaboration of detail consonant with a mood and situation.

Rationale of Primary Trait: The situation is specified as the rainy morning of a school day. The direction "pretend" invites the writer to recall a situation and generalize an attitude toward it. "Write a composition" invites the respondent to be careful about organization, so the elaboration must be systematic in trying to evoke a defined or implied state.

General Scoring Rationale: The key issue is to validate a generalized attitude by citing apt detail. The feelings may be simple (I like it, I hate it) or complex (I feel sad when I get up, but when I go out I feel better). Details may be representative (wet clothes, sound of rain, darkness, hinderance to play, necessity to wear wraps) or analogical (like someone's nagging, like I lost my friends, like I am going to get sick), but they should validate how one feels. A good paper will require a more evident organizational system and more details. Some writers engage in dialogue. Others state a thesis within an explicit situation in the manner of a formal essay. The approach and style are left to the writer but a good paper must have sufficient detail to clearly convey feeling and must be well organized.

Scoring Guide Categories:

0 = No response.

1 = Little or no expression of feelings. These responses do not fulfill the two basic conditions established by the trait--stating a feeling and elaborating that feeling. This may occur in the following ways: 1) one or two feelings may be named but are not substantiated with any kind of detail, 2) a feeling is named but is only substantiated with one unelaborated detail, 3) some details are given, but feelings are not named or are so vague as to be basically nonexistent, or 4) feelings and/or details are too confusing, contradictory or inconsistent to determine the writer's dominant feeling.

Scoring Guide Categories (continued):

2 = Minimal expression of feelings. These responses minimally fulfill the two basic conditions established by the trait: 1) they name or clearly imply a feeling (no matter how generalized the naming or implication is, as in, good/bad, like/dislike) and 2) they name some of the consequences of the situation that account for that feeling (no matter how generalized, as in wet, cold, sounds good, looks beautiful) or they name one consequence and elaborate on it.

NOTE: These responses may include contradictory feelings, but most of the paper is devoted to elaborating one of the feelings. Ambivalence (feeling both good and bad) about rainy school days is legitimate. As long as that position is clearly stated, these papers are not considered contradictory.

3 = Expression of feeling. These responses precisely establish a dominant feeling and elaborate using a variety of specific details consistent with the feeling. Some principle of arrangement is present -- temporal, climatic, controlling point of reference, etc. Generally, these papers clearly show competence in expressing and substantiating a feeling. But they do not show simultaneous control of both structure and detail. For example, "3" papers may include some element of conflict in feeling or detail which is not integrated with the dominant attitude (but conflict is merely distracting rather than seriously confused as in "1" responses) or these papers may be well controlled but somewhat lacking in variety and amplitude of detail.

4 = Developed and elaborated expression of feeling. These responses precisely define a feeling or feelings and substantiate them through an amplitude and variety of appropriate details. The details are systematically arranged and placed into a structure and tight control is demonstrated at all points.

7 = Illegible, illiterate.

8 = Misunderstands the task, writes on another topic.

9 = I don't know.

COHESION SCORING GUIDE
(Developed for the 1978-79 Writing Assessment)
"RAINY DAY"

In scoring papers for cohesion, scorers need to be attentive not only to the incidence of cohesive ties but also to their successful ordering. Underlying and further strengthening these ties is syntactic repetition, both within and across sentences. The following example achieves cohesion by lexical cohesion, conjunction, reference, and substitution, and yet these various kinds of cohesion are both emphasized and related among themselves by numerous incidents of syntactic repetition.

> A rainy school morning makes me feel awful. I feel like being mean to my brothers for no reason. On a rainy morning the whole world seems against me. I wake up on the wrong side of the bed and I'm grouchy. On a rainy school morning nothing goes right. I'm late for breakfast, slow in getting dressed and usually I forget something I need for school.

When both the incidence and ordering of cohesive ties pattern the entire piece of writing, the writer has created what we ordinarily call coherence.

Scoring Guide Categories:

1 = Little or no evidence of cohesion. Basically, clauses and sentences are not connected beyond pairings.

2 = Attempts at cohesion. There is evidence of gathering details but little or no evidence that these details are meaningfully ordered. In other words, very little seems lost if the details were rearranged.

3 = Cohesion. Details are both gathered and ordered. Cohesion is achieved in the ways illustrated briefly in the definition above. Cohesion does not necessarily lead to coherence, to the successful binding of parts so that the sense of the whole discourse is greater than the sense of its parts. In pieces of writing that are cohesive rather than coherent, there are large sections of details which cohere but these sections stand apart as sections.

4 = Coherence. While there may be a sense of sections within the piece of writing, the sheer number and variety of cohesion strategies bind the details and sections into a wholeness. This sense of wholeness can be achieved by a saturation of syntactic repetition throughout the piece (see description above) and/or closure which retrospectively orders the entire piece and/or by general statements which organize the whole piece.

7 = Illegible, illiterate.

8 = Misunderstands the task, writes on another topic.

9 = I don't know.

NOTE: Scorers should not take mechanics or transcription errors into consideration. Also, the scorers should judge only the interrelatedness of the ideas, NOT the quality of those ideas.

Examples of Cohesive Ties:

In general, "cohesion" refers to the ways clauses and sentences are related to each other and can be thought of as the gathering and ordering of related ideas. If the parts of a discourse cohere, they "stick" or are "bound" together. Cohesion is achieved by ties of considerable variety, and these ties can be both semantic and structural. Additional examples of specific kinds of cohesion ties are identified by Halliday and Hasan in Cohesion in English.

Lexical Re-naming

I like rain on school days but I dislike rain on weekends.

I stepped right into a puddle. That puddle was a complete surprise to me. That muddy hole ruined my day. That place fooled me.

Semantic Conjunction

Additive-
It was a muggy day and I couldn't stay awake.

Adversative-
I really didn't feel like going to school in the rain, yet I did anyway.

Causal-
I love rainy school days because my mom always lets me stay in bed.

Temporal-
I put on my raincoat when it rains. Then I put on my plastic hat. Finally, I get myself out the door.

Pronominal Reference

Personal-
Rainy mornings are never fun for kids. They get wet waiting for the school bus.

Demonstrative-
I feel sad on rainy school mornings. That feeling is one I don't like.

Comparative-
Today's the same kind of rainy day as the one we had yesterday.

Pro-form Substitution

Nominal-
I couldn't find my yellow rain coat, but my mon told me to take the other one.

Clausal (use of so and not)-
Was it going to rain all day? The weatherman said so.

Ellipsis

Nominal-
This was not the first rainy day I'd stayed in bed, only the second [ ].

Verbal-
I usually stay in bed on rainy mornings, but I didn't [ ] this time.

Clausal-
I could either stay in bed or get up and go to school, but I couldn't decide which [ ].

Note: While helping plan the 1978-79 writing assessment, National Assessment consultants expressed the opinion that coherence and cohesion deserved special consideration and that a more thorough method of describing information about coherence was needed. In consequence, this cohesion scoring guide was developed and used with the "Rainy Day" exercise to replace the paragraph coherence guidelines developed in 1973-74 and used with the "Describe Something" exercise.

SAMPLES

Primary Trait

Score Point 1

I feel that when I get up in the mornings and it's Raining that the day is going to be long and dreary. So I go about the day as best as I can. I try to make the day a happy one.

* * * * *

I feel cold because the rain reminds me of it being cold. I feel like dressing warmly, but it is usually too humid to do that. Sometimes I also feel like sweeping around in it, especially during the summer.

Score Point 2

It makes me feel settled. I can really get down to work. I know that I wouldn't like to be out in the rain. I am not rowdy at all on these kinds of morning I feel like studying or reading a book by a fire. I sometime feel chilled on these mornings It makes me sad and calm because the pattern that the rain falls in calms me. All in all I feel very calm, and like studying.

On a rainy school morning I usually don't want to get up because it is still pretty dark outside. When I finally do get up I'm tired and feel rotten. I end up getting up late so I might be rushed. I also might miss my bus. If I miss my bus I will be tardy to school and I will probably be crabby all day.

Score Point 3

A rainy day at school makes me feel lousy. When I get up I freeze. The wet makes me feel sticky some times. When I get to get in the car, I always get wet a little no matter what then I become hot in the car and sweaty. But can not open the window because it's raining. During school you can't play. You stay in the class room when it is hot and stuffy. Your school you have to go in front of the church, you get wet again. All day you stay in the house and just clean or do nothing. You have to just watch it rain everywhere.

A rainy school morning makes me feel lazy like I don't want to get out of bed, I just want to stay home. Because its too wet out. But usually I end up going to school. It so fun after I got up get dressed and get to school because for lunch we eat inside when we go out on our breaks its sort of dark out. And usually Mr. Hughes our teacher and Mrs Huber are in a good mood.

My friends are in a good mood and they crack jokes and we all laugh.

So too me a rainy day is a fun day, even if you're lazy in the morning.

Score Point 4

On a rainy school morning I feel a little sad. When it is raining there is nothing to do. People huddle under umbrella's and scurry up the street while I walk slowly along. As the rain steadily beats down I feel as if it will never end. The clouds rolling overhead and the water forming big puddles and rolling down the sidewalk in little streams only add to the dreariness. I would like to crawl back into bed and wait for tomorrow to come. All my plans for the day must be cancell and so I have nothing to look forward to. As the rain beats down and I get wetter I feel as if I am the only person in the world who had plans and saw them get washed away with the rain. As I slowly walk on I realize that the rain will be gone tomorrow but it doesn't help my feelings. Today is still today and tomorrow is a long way off.

Unlike most people, I sincerely like rain. A rainy school morning gives me a kind of cozy, warm feeling inside. It just so happens that today, is a rainy school day. When I got up, I knew it would be rain & chilly outside, so I picked soft, woolen clothes to wear. I also drank some hot cocoa.

As far back as I can remember, I've always liked rain. When I was younger I used to go to an old school that had school buses. I would dress warm & get off to a good start, before I got on the bus. Then I would sit with my friend Barbara & we would talk & compare homework. When we finally arrived at the big, old red brick building, we would get off the bus & go inside. All day long my friend & I would play & do our work in the warm classroom. Our class was on the 3rd floor & we used to sit on the wing windowsill above the heater & play with clay, & color as we looked out at the guard, little drops in the drizzle & cozy from our high, cozy perch. All these fond memories came rushing back to me this morning when I got up & saw the rain.

Cohesion

Score Point 1

I feel like I just don't want to get up I feel lazy and tired. I feel like I just got run over by a truck. I feel very bored

* * * * *

I feel dreary, and cooled. I also feel that I don't move around as well and I get mad because my hair falls down. I think rain is fun sometimes. I hate to catch the bus when it raining. When it rains on a school day I can't have as well I don't know why. I get mad easily and sometime want to go home. I feel like I have to take a bath every five minute, because I feel musty.

Score Point 2

I feel very tired and I don't like to go to school when it is raining because the bus is really very loud and in the afternoon I'm really all wet from running from the gym and the bus is very very loud. And I would be very mad because we have to stay inside for lunch and recess and we can't go out side all day long but to change classes.

* * * * *

A rainy school morning makes me feel upset. It makes me feel like something awful is going to happen. Like many accidents happen when it rains. It makes me scared if it is a cold winter rain. A spring rain in April makes me feel safe and warm. The smell of a spring rain makes you feel free, like you have nothing to worry about. To some people like farmers, rain is important. I like the sunshine better. I often get a cold feeling when it rains hard.

Score Point 3

It makes me feel bad because I know I'll have to stay in all day, and won't get to do anything outside until it stops and even then it is wet. And I hate to get out in the rain in morning and have to go to school and sit out in the cold until the bell rings. Then after school if it still raining I have to walk home in the rain.

* * * * *

Rainy school mornings leave me with a melancholy feeling. Rainy days are boring and I dread waiting for the bus in the rain. When I am waiting for the bus I think of the piles of schoolwork that I have before me. The dead gray drops make me think of tests and homework. The cold puddles remind me of an ogre, or maybe a robot.

Rainy days can get me down, but I know I will spring back up with a smile when the sun shine again.

Score Point 4

When I get up in the morning and it's rainy the first thing I think is "It's going to be a boring day." I get the feeling that I'd rather stay home. I get the feeling that I should just stay home because I would not pay attention in class anyway. The day seems very wasted when I think of sitting through six and one half hours of school. I get a dull worthless feeling in my stomach, and I think "What a boring day it's going to be!"

I woke up to the sound of rain rattling on the roof and the smell of waffles in the air. Great way to start off a morning, I thought bitterly; rain and waffles my favourite combination!

I groaned as my mother cheerfully came into the room to get me up.

"Wake up!" she said smiling.

"How can you be so cheerful on a day like this. It really depresses me!" I said dully as I sat up and turned on my radio.

"Don't worry," she said. "Once you get some breakfast into you you'll feel better."

I doubt it I thought.

After I had gotten dressed I went downstairs and had breakfast Waffles, yuk!

I slowly put on my rubber boots and my raincoat. I put my books in a plastic bag and walked out the front door.

Depressed and totally miserable because of this rain she I might continuing on the long walk to school

"Loss" Exercise

Everybody knows or can imagine what it is like to lose something or someone of special importance. Valuable things may be lost or broken, close friends or relatives may die or move away, favorite pets may be lost or killed.

Think of some loss you have experienced. Tell what you especially remember about what you lost, and how it feels to experience such a loss. Space is provided below and on the next two pages.

WRITING TASK: Loss

NAEP #: 0-101007-52A-2

RHETORICAL MODE: Expressive

OBJECTIVE: I. Demonstrates ability in writing to reveal personal feelings and ideas.

SUBOBJECTIVE: A. Through free expression

NAEP SCORING: Primary Trait: Expression and substantiation of value and feeling through recollection and inventive elaboration.

AGE: 13

TOTAL TIME IN SECONDS: 1113

NUMBER OF LINES: p.1 - 12
p.2 - 20
p.3 - 21

TRAIT SCORING GUIDE
"LOSS"

Rhetorical Mode: Expressive

Primary Trait: Expression and substantiation of value and feeling through recollection and inventive elaboration.

Rationale of Primary Trait: This exercise is oriented to writing about the experience of loss, in particular, the kind of loss which arouses intense feeling. The directive for the exercise requires respondents to write about the loss in two interrelated ways. First, respondents are asked to "tell what you especially remember about what you lost." In this way they are led to express and to substantiate the "special importance" of the lost object, pet or person. Respondents are next asked to tell "how it feels to experience such a loss." In other words, they have to translate feelings into tangible terms. The directive as a whole requires respondents to use writing as a means of defining the nature of a personal loss -- by defining the value of what was lost and by defining the felt experience of losing that object, pet or person. In both instances, the definition is expressed and substantiated through recollection.

General Scoring Rationale: In rating this exercise, readers should look for evidence that writing is being used to express and substantiate the nature of a particular loss -- with respect to both the importance of what has been lost and the feeling about the loss. The first may be done through 1) connotative or value-laden description of the object, pet or person, 2) description or narration of shared activities or past events involving the object, pet or person, 3) metaphoric statements about the relationship between the respondent and what has been lost. The feeling may be established by 1) descriptions of mental, emotional or physiological reactions to the loss; 2) descriptions of physical reactions to the loss, such as looking for the object, burying the pet, or visiting the grave of a person; 3) metaphoric statements which define or seek to define the feeling by using comparisons. In looking for evidence that both value and feeling have been expressed and substantiated, readers should not be misled or distracted by pure reporting of events leading up to or circumstances concerning the time and place of the loss. It is inevitable that respondents will include some facts, but readers should recognize that merely factual reports or sections of a response given over to factual reporting are not evidence of a particular value or a particular feeling associated with the loss.

General Scoring Rationale (continued):

Readers should also be aware that assertions of value, feeling or reaction--"It was of great value to me," "It was important to me," "I was sad," "I felt bad," "I cried"--are too vague and generalized in and of themselves to be regarded as evidence of substantiation. Readers should look for specific and detailed evidence in the responses that writing is being used to express and substantiate the emotional process that loss involves. Something of value which once existed and produced feelings of pleasure or satisfaction no longer exists. (For responses that consider more than one loss, readers should choose the section of the paper that would receive the highest classification.)

Scoring Guides Categories:

0 = No response.

1 = Little or no expression of value and feeling. These responses show no or only vague evidence of using writing to express and substantiate value and feeling through recollection and elaboration of details concerning a particular loss.

a = Some "1" responses offer factual reports of varying lengths but include no or only vague assertions of feeling.

b = Some "1" papers list a series of losses. Some parts of the series identify the losses and nothing more; others may offer vague assertions of feeling.

c = Other "1" responses are just too sparse to provide any substantiation of feeling and/or value. "I was sad when my favorite grandfather died." "My cute puppy was run over by a car. I cried." "I was sad and depressed when my dog died." "My aunt was nice. She came over everyday."

2 = Moderate expression of value and feeling. These responses show some evidence of using writing to express and substantiate value and feeling through recollection and inventive elaboration of details concerning a particular loss.

a = Some "2" papers offer details (2-3) to establish and substantiate feeling about the loss but do little or nothing to substantiate the value of what has been lost.

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Scoring Guide Categories (continued):

b = Some "2" papers offer details (2-3) to substantiate the value of what has been lost but do little or nothing to substantiate a feeling about the loss. Some of these papers may even substantiate the value of what has been lost at considerable length, but any feeling concerning loss is only vaguely present.

c = Some of these responses substantiate both value and feeling, but the details are few (1 or 2 for each dimension) and relatively generalized.

3 = Expression of value and feeling. These papers use writing to express and substantiate value and feeling through recollection and inventive elaboration of details concerning a particular loss.

a = Some "3" papers offer extensive substantiation of feeling, yet they do little or nothing to substantiate the particular value of what has been lost. Still, the feelings expressed in the responses imply the value of the loss.

b = Some papers which substantiate the value of what has been lost at considerable length may also be classified "3", if feeling is implied. The reader should have a real sense of closeness or loss.

c = Some "3" responses substantiate both value and feeling (2 or 3 details for each dimension), but the development is still somewhat uneven or the details tend to be generalized.

4 = Developed elaboration of expression of value and feeling. These papers express and substantiate value and feeling at length and they do so through details that are sufficient, specific and vivid to establish the precise quality of what has been lost and the nature of the feelings experienced about the loss. These papers tend to be well organized and develop the experiential quality of the loss.

7 = Illegible, illiterate.

8 = Misunderstands the task, writes on another topic.

9 = I don't know.

SAMPLES

Primary Trait

Score Point 1

It feels kind of sad because my oldest brother died when he was a little baby. My grandmother died four years ago and my grandfather died last year.

* * * * *

One day I was at school and I came home to play with my dog, but she was gone, she got out on the front of the house, and the dog catchers caught her.

Score Point 2

Once I had a dog, his name was Duke. Duke was a beautiful and shiny dog. He was a large and fearless dog, he never feared anything. He could jump over a 5ft. fence without running. He could almost beat every dog on our block, except a dog name Skippy. Duke and Skippy were a lot in fighting. One day Duke jumped the fence without me telling him and he ran like lightning. He ran as fast as he could and I never did see Duke again.

* * * * *

My Grandpa taught me more than any one else could. He was the one friend I could always count on. It was awful when he died. At first I couldn't believe it. He had just been talking about things me to Canada with him the next summer. It was really terrible.

Score Point 3

I lost a cat one time that was very dear to me. Her name was Penny. She was not hit by a car, or anything like that. She had a very serious disease. (I'm not sure what it was.) I loved this cat very much. I raised her from the very beginning, when we first got her. She was small + sick; her mother didn't want her. When she died, I remember how I felt. I felt ~~[illegible]~~ lost; as though the world was coming to an end. I cried and cried, until I could hardly breathe. There was a terrible lump in my throat, and my whole body felt like lead. It's an awful feeling!

* * * * *

When my pet dog died, I was very sad. I kept remembering the fun times we had. I cried a lot, & felt that I had lost something very dear to me. It felt like something was taken out of me. I felt empty & lonely. But then I thought that it was better for him to die than to suffer & now I just try to look back happily at his joyous life.

Score Point 4

If I lost a person in my family, I know it felt horrible. I would probably think of all the figures we had and regret them. All I would think of all the fun we had together and probably would wish myself dead for a while.

People don't really know what they have until it's gone so I don't know how my life would go on. It probably come to places in my life that remind me of the person that was lost in my family and it cry all over again.

(Continued)

I really love everyone in my family very much though. I may not show it sometimes.

I hope this never happens to me because my life would never be the same from then on. I might even change to the type of person who keeps everything to themselves and suffers silently because I always console my closest sister for every problem that I have. My little brother is my pride and joy and I can't live him. My parents and the other brother and sister also help in making life bearable, sometimes harder but, most of the time they help me.

* * * * *

When I was a little girl in kindergarten I met a girl named Kim. We were best friends soon after we met. We went to the same school up through 3rd grade. We were practically inseparable. One day I came to school and Kim wasn't there. I had a very strange feeling about it but I didn't say anything. After three days of her not being at school I asked my mom to call her mother. When my mother got off of the phone she looked sad. Kim was in the hospital, she had been run-over by a car and was in critical condition. They operated on her but it didn't succeed. She died the next morning.

I had to adjust a lot after that. At first I was very remote but after a while I began to have other friendships. It felt very strange to have someone taken away like that. You always see it happen to other people and you say to yourself "It'll never happen to me." But it does.

"Principal Letter" Exercise

Imagine that your principal asked for suggestions about how to make things better in your school. Write a letter to your principal telling just ONE thing you think should be changed, how to bring about the change, and how the school will be improved by it. Space is provided below and on the next three pages. Sign your letter "Chris Johnson."

333 West Street
Loden, Ohio 99999
September 5, 1978

Mary Hopkins, Principal
Martin Intermediate School
Loden, Ohio 99999

WRITING TASK: Letter to the Principal

NAEP #: 0-201006-52A-2

RHETORICAL MODE: Persuasive - Social/Organizational

OBJECTIVE: II. Demonstrates ability to write in response to a wide range of societal demands and obligations. Ability is defined to include correctness in usage, punctuation, spelling, and form or convention as appropriate to particular writing tasks, e.g., manuscripts, letters.

SUBOBJECTIVE: A. Social 2. Organizational

NAEP SCORING: Primary Trait: Persuasion through invention of issues, arguments, and evidence appropriate to the defense of a proposition.

AGE: 13

TOTAL TIME IN SECONDS: 927

NUMBER OF LINES:
p.1 - 8
p.2 - 26
p.3 - 21
p.4 - 25

TRAIT SCORING GUIDE
"LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL"

Rhetorical Mode: Persuasive - Social/Organizational

Primary Trait: Persuasion through invention of issues, arguments, and evidence appropriate to the defense of a proposition.

Rationale of Primary Trait: The key terms in the directive are "one thing you think should be changed, how to bring about the change and how the school will be improved by it." Taken together, these terms indicate the persuasive orientation of the exercise and the method by which the persuasion is to be carried out. Respondents are being asked to use writing not as a way of simply expressing personal desire and dissatisfaction, but as a means of communicating public need and discovering ways of dealing systematically with public need.

General Scoring Rationale: Since the directions for this exercise seek to elicit reasoned and systematic methods of persuasion, reponses to this exercise should be scored in terms of this criterion alone. Matters such as tone or letter form, for example, should not be weighed in scoring. Qualities that should be weighed as evidence of systematic persuasion are: 1) focus--evidenced by definition and concentration on a single change or problem and its solution and 2) appropriateness of development--evidenced by consideration of issues, arguments, reasoning and by showing the change is practical and will bring about positive results.

Scoring Guide Categories:

0 = No response.

1 = Do not define and defend a change. Some "1" papers do not propose a change or identify a problem, they are simply statements of attitude, judgement, desire or dissatisfaction. Other "1" papers do identify a problem or recommend a change, but do not explain how to implement the change or solve the problem. They do not tell how the school will be benefitted.

NOTE: An elaborately detailed description of a problem should not be scored higher than "1" if no solution is identified or defended. Lists of problems or changes should also be scored "1".

Scoring Guide Categories (continued):

2 = Define a change and offer minimal defense. Respondents state a change they want made in their school or a problem that needs solving. In addition, they must tell: 1) how to bring about the change or solve the problem or 2) some way the school will be improved by the proposed change or solution.

Some "2" papers do present all three elements, but the reasoning is not developed. Some are in a sketchy, skeletal, rudimentary form that is basically a bare outline. Others are disjointed or the ideas aren't related (solution doesn't solve problem, benefit isn't related to change, etc.).

3 = Define and defend a change. Papers state a change or identify a problem, explain how to bring about the change or solve the problem and tell how the change will benefit the school. Reasoning is used to expand or explain at least one of the elements. For example, there might be a detailed plan for bringing about the change, an enumeration of the benefits or an elaborate explanation of the problem. Usually, one element is well developed while the others are only asserted or barely mentioned resulting in an unevenly developed paper. (Occasionally a "3" paper will contain an elaboration of a severe problem (drugs, race riots, etc.) that implies the benefits without stating them.)

4 = Systematically define and defend a change. These papers have all the elements of "3" papers. In addition, they cast the material in a systematic structure which reflects the logical steps in the process of bringing about the change. At least two, and possibly all, of the elements are expanded so that the various issues are related to each other and to the proposition being defended.

7 = Illegible, illiterate.

8 = Misunderstands the task, writes on another topic.

9 = I don't know.

Primary Trait

Score Point 1

Dear Sir:

To make this school better I would build a swimming pool with a low diving board and a high one. I think this would make the students happy.

Sincerely yours,
Chris Johnson

* * * * *

Mark Hopkins

We need more activies like more clubs more space for the playground better food and bigger rooms. That might help a little. You should have sales to raise more money for school More field trips. Have a school meeting

Sign.
Chris Johnson

Score Point 2

Dear Mark,

I think we should be able to go to our lockers before loading the buses. You should let us go when the hand bell rings. It will keep from bringing unneeded books home.

Chris Johnson

* * * * *

Dear Sir,

I think the school should be improved by having more special activities such as, pep rallies, dances, sports, and so on.

I think that with these school activitiues the school spirit will increase and perhaps better relations between Students and Faculty will come about.

Sincerely,
Chris Johnson

Score Point 3

Dear Mrs. Hopkins,

I would like to see more sports in our school and more people participated in them. I feel you should take a survey in which each person writes four sports he or she would like to participate in. After this is done the four most wanted sports should be scheduled during after school time.

I think this would help our school become more active and more people would get to know other kids.

Sincerely yours,
Chris Johnson

* * * * *

Dear Sir,

The school that we are in has a small pool. I think we can improve this by putting in a telephone, not a pay telephone, because most kids won't have money for it. We can raise the money by a bake sale, on this coming Friday. We can hire some man to put it in. The changes will be great. Mrs. Smith our secretary would not be bothered by kids who want to use the phone. It would be greatly appreciate. by all. If you allow my suggestion to pass

Sincerely,
Chris Johnson.

Score Point 4

Dear Mr. Hopkins

I am writing this letter so that you may be aware of how I feel about our school. I think that the main thing our school is lacking is spirit. Very rarely do you hear a student bragging about his school, his football team, his basketball team, or any other important object about his school.

The change, in my opinion, could be brought about very easily. More pep rallies, school activities, spirit posters, and encouragement of spirit in many other ways would make our school a much more pleasant place to enlarge our education.

If Martin Intermediate School was a school of great spirit, students would be proud of their school they would try to keep it cleaner, and would probably try to attend school more.

Although this letter is just an opinion of one person, several others may have similar opinions. I thank you for giving me an opportunity to express my opinions and I hope you will consider them in the future.

Yours truly,
Chris Johnson

Dear Principal Hopkins

I have a suggestion that I think would help the school. I think the school need more audio and video equipment. This would help teachers in many ways. It would help keep freshmen across more closely. It would be more interesting for the students. Also it would help children get individual help because the teacher could get one group to watch a filmstrip or listen to a tape while she helps another group or child. I think perhaps the school could have some fund raising projects to get the money. Please consider my suggestion.

Yours Truly
Chris Johnson

FREE -- THE POSTER CALENDAR OF YOUR CHOICE!!!

Get a beautiful poster calendar free!

Choose either:

1. Famous Rock Group

or

2. Mountains and Stream

Tell me which poster you want. If you ask me for it and tell me your name and address, I will send you your beautiful poster.

Sincerely,

Mary Jones, Manager
National Book Store

Pretend that your name is Chris Brown and that you live at 37 Elm Street, Gulf, Ohio 76543. On the next page, write a letter to Mary Jones requesting the calendar.

WRITING TASK: Poster Calendar

NAEP #: 0-202031-A1A-12

RHETORICAL MODE: Explanatory - Business

OBJECTIVE: II. Demonstrates ability to write in response to a wide range of societal demands and obligations. Ability is defined to include correctness in usage, punctuation, spelling, and form or convention as appropriate to particular writing tasks, e.g., manuscripts, letters.

SUBOBJECTIVE: B. Business/Vocational

NAEP SCORING: Primary Trait: Explanation through supplying of information in a form required by a situation.

AGE:	9	13
TOTAL TIME IN SECONDS:	407	410
NUMBER OF LINES:	p.1 - 13 p.2 - 10	p.1 - 23

TRAIT SCORING GUIDE
"POSTER CALENDAR"

Rhetorical Mode: Explanatory - Business

Primary Trait: Explanation through supplying of information in a form required by a situation.

Rationale of Primary Trait: The stimulus for this exercise requires respondents to clearly communicate the information necessary to receive the poster calendar of their choice. It also suggests that the response should conform to the conventions of a letter of request. The main issue is will the letter accomplish its purpose -- the receipt of the selected poster calendar. The tone and style of the letter are of lesser importance.

General Scoring Rationale: The main criteria for rating this exercise are the presence and accuracy of the information transmitted. Readers should look for a greeting, the name of the sender, the address of the sender, a request, identification of the poster calendar and a statement of choice.

Scoring Guide Categories:

0 = No response.

1 = Name or address is in some crucial sense incomplete and/or calendar not referred to in any way.

2 = The writer gives name and address and requests or refers to calendar, but does not give a specific choice.

3 = The writer directly requests calendar (i.e., something like "Please send me the free poster calendar"); gives name and address; states choice.

7 = Illegible, illiterate.

8 = Misunderstands the task, writes on another topic.

9 - I don't know.

NOTE: Due to the straightforward nature of the task, this guide did not include a category "4." It was felt that a "3" was sufficient and no further elaboration was necessary.

Also, to maximize reporting capabilities National Assessment categorized the following six pieces of information as present or not present. The four trait categories were derived through data analysis.

A: Greeting/Miss, Mrs., Ms., Mary Jones, To Mary, Manager National Book Store
B: Name/Chris Brown, Chris, Brown
C: Address/37 Elm Street
Gulf, Ohio 76543
D: Request/Please send me the free poster calendar
E: Refers to calendar or poster or picture
F: States choice

SAMPLES

Primary Trait

Score Point 1

Mary Jones . please sent me
a calender of famous Rock Group.
I will be glad you did
Thank you.

* * * * *

Well mary I think
what I would like
to have both of theme
for my freinds room
or maybe just one
for him thank you

Bey!!!

Sincerely
Chris Brown

Score Point 2

Dear Mary Jones I would like the Famous
Rock Group. My name is Chris Brown I live at
37 Elm Street, Gulf Ohio 76543

37 Elm Street
Gulf Ohio 76543

Mary Jones I would like to have
The calender for The Kitchen To
Hange on The wall

CHRIS BROWN

37 ELM STREET GULF OHIO
76543

Score Point 3

Dear Mrs Jones,
I [redacted] would like
you to send me the posters of a
famous rock group My name is
Chris Brown.

Sincerely
Chris Brown
37 Elm St.
Gulf, Ohio 76543

P.S. Thank you for such a
great offer!

* * * * *

37 Elm Street
Gulf, Ohio
October 20, 1978

Mary Jones
National Book store

Dear Ms. Jones,
Please send me one of your free posters
calender of mountains and streams.
My name and address is

Chris Brown
37 Elm Street
Gulf, Ohio
76543

Thankyou very much
Sincerly,

Chris Brown

APPENDIX B

GUIDELINES FOR SYNTAX AND MECHANICS ANALYSIS

Appendix B contains outlines of the features National Assessment hand tabulated for the T-unit analysis of syntax, the sentence-type analysis, and the mechanics analysis. It should be noted that since National Assessment computerized the text of all the papers involved in these studies, basic descriptive counts (average essay length, average word length, etc.) were machine tabulated. Rationales, as well as detailed definitions of the outlined features, are contained in Mullis and Mellon (1980). Also, the detailed guidelines used by the scorers who accomplished these tabulations are available from National Assessment.

SYNTAX SCORING GUIDE OUTLINE
T-UNIT ANALYSIS
(Developed for the 1978-79 Writing Assessment)
"Rainy Day" -- Expressive Exercise

I. T-unit delineation -- A T-unit is one main clause with all its phrases and subordinating clauses. (Fragments are included with either the preceding or the following T-unit, as appropriate.)

II. Embedding

A. Nominalization

1. Nominal Clauses -- clauses used as subjects, direct objects, subject complements or objects of prepositions.

2. Nominal Phrases -- phrases used as subjects, direct objects, subject complements or objects of prepositions.

B. Modification

1. Adjectival

a. Relative Clauses -- clauses that modify nouns or, occasionally, complete sentences including clauses of time, place and manner.

b. Modifying Phrases -- restrictive and non-restrictive phrases directly following the nouns they modify.

c. Transposed Modifying Phrases -- non-restrictive phrases separated from the nouns they modify, verbal phrases, nominative absolutes, appositive noun phrases.

d. Genitives -- possessive phrases, pre-noun proper name possessives and possessive pronouns.

e. Single Word Pre-noun Modifiers -- adjectives that precede the nouns they modify.

2. Adverbial

a. Adverbial Clauses -- clauses of reason (cause/purpose)--because, condition--if, and concession--although.

b. Adverbial Phrases -- phrases of reason (cause/purpose)--condition and concession.

III. Conjoining and Connective Devices

A. Coordinate
(Since NAEP computerized the text for the essays, counts of both intra- and inter-T-unit uses of "and" and "or" were machine tabulated.)

B. Semantic (other logical relationships)

1. Time naming structures -- clauses or phrases that establish time.

2. Adversatives and illatives-- words, clauses, or phrases that establish time.

3. Other signposts -- words, clauses, or phrases that indicate an addition, a sequence, or a comparison.

SYNTAX (SENTENCE TYPES) AND MECHANICS
SCORING GUIDE OUTLINE
(Developed for the 1973-74 Writing Assessment)
"Rainy Day" -- Expressive Exercise
"Describe" -- Descriptive Exercise

I. Sentence Level Syntax Categories

Description of Sentence Types

1. Minor sentence (correct fragment) -- A word group used in dialogue, for emphasis, or as an exclamation that is not an independent clause.

2. Simple -- A sentence that contains a subject and a verb. It may also have an object or a subject complement.

3. Simple with phrase -- A simple sentence that contains a prepositional, infinitive, gerund and/or participial phrase. Sentences containing appositives, nominative absolutes, and verbals were also scored in this category.

4. Compound -- A sentence containing two or more simple sentences joined by something other than a comma.

5. Compound with phrase -- A compound sentence containing at least one phrase in one of the independent clauses.

6. Complex (and compound-complex) -- A sentence containing at least one independent clause and one dependent clause.

7. Complex (and compound-complex) with phrase -- A sentence containing at least one independent clause, one dependent clause, and one phrase.

II. Sentence Level Mechanics Categories

A. Sentence Types with Punctuation Errors (sentences that do not fall into any of the syntax categories).

1. Run-on Sentence

   a. Fused -- A sentence containing two or more independent clauses with no punctuation or conjunction separating them.

   b. On and on -- A sentence consisting of four or more independent clauses strung together with conjunctions.

   c. Comma splice -- A sentence containing two or more independent clauses separated by a comma instead of a semicolon or a coordinating conjunction.

2. Incorrect fragment -- A word group, other than an independent clause, written and punctuated as a sentence.

NOTE: The scoring of T-unit constituents made it possible for some of the preceding sentence types to be derived through data analysis for the "Rainy Day" papers.

B. Faulty Sentence Construction (These scores are in addition to the sentence types.)

1. Agreement Error -- A sentence where at least one of the following is present: subject/verb do not agree, pronoun/antecedent do not agree, noun/modifier do not agree, subject/object pronoun misused, and/or verb tense shifts.

2. Awkward Sentence (The awkward categories are listed in order of category precedence, since only one score was given to a sentence.)

   a. Faulty parallelism -- A parallel construction that is semantically or structurally dysfunctional.

   b. Unclear pronoun reference -- A pronoun's antecedent is unclear.

   c. Illogical construction -- Faulty modification or a dangling modifier or a functionally misarranged or misproportioned sentence.

   d. Other dysfunctions -- A sentence containing an omitted or extra word and/or a split construction that definitely detracts from readability.

III. Punctuation Errors -- Every error of commission and error of omission is scored for commas, dashes, quotation marks, semicolons, apostrophes, and end marks. The most informal rules of usage are used with the writer receiving the benefit of any doubt.

IV. Word Level Mechanics Categories

A. Word Choice -- The writer needs a word that is different from the one written. This category also includes attempts at a verb, adjective, or adverb form that is nonexistent or unacceptable.

B. Spelling -- In addition to a misspelling, this category includes word division errors at the end of a line, two words written as one, one word written as two, superfluous plurals, and groups of distinguishable letters that do not make a legitimate word.

C. Capitalization -- A word is given a capitalization error score if the first word in a sentence is not capitalized, if a proper noun or adjective within a sentence is not capitalized, and if the pronoun "I" is not capitalized.

The mechanics scoring was designed to allow the writer as much flexibility as possible under existing rules of correct writing; consequently, any time two authorities on mechanics disagreed, the most informal interpretation was used.

APPENDIX C

GROUP RESULTS, EXERCISES EVALUATED FOR PRIMARY TRAIT AND COHESION

The tables in Appendix C present group differences from the national percentage, not the actual performance of the group. Thus, if the national percentages for a particular item is, for example 71% and the group difference from the nation is 12%, the group percentage, or performance level, is 71 plus 12, or 83%. The advantage to presenting group data in terms of differences is that such tables enable one to see whether the relative position of a group, vis-a-vis the nation, is changing. As before, an asterisk next to a group difference signifies that the difference is statistically significant; an asterisk next to the percentage estimating the change for that group signifies that the change is statistically significant.

Table C-1. "Rainy Day" Exercise, Primary Trait
Table C-2 "Rainy Day" Exercise, Cohesion
Table C-3. "Loss" Exercise, Primary Trait
Table C-4. "Principal Letter" Exercise, Primary Trait
Table C-5. "Poster Calendar" Exercise, Primary Trait

TABLE C-1 Group Differences From National Percentages, "Rainy Day" Exercise Primary Trait Scores, 1969, 1973, 1978

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Little or No Feelings 1	Minimal Feelings 2	Expressed Feelings 3	Elaborated Feelings 4	Marginal or Better 2,3&4	Competent or Better 3&4
Nation (%)	1969	1.6	32.3	55.9	9.3	0.9	66.0	10.2
	1973	1.2	32.9	61.8	3.7	0.2	65.8	4.0
	1978	0.5	33.2	60.1	5.7	0.5	66.3	6.2
	1969–78	-1.1*	0.9	4.2*	-3.6*	-0.4	0.2	-4.0*
Region								
Southeast	1969	1.7	1.8	-2.9	-0.9	0.3	-3.5	-0.7
	1973	0.7	5.8*	-6.1*	-0.3	-0.1	-6.5*	-0.4
	1978	0.3	1.3	-1.7	0.5	-0.5*	-1.6	0.1
	1969–78	-1.4	-0.5	1.2	1.4	-0.7	1.9	0.7
West	1969	-0.4	2.8	0.4	-2.6	-0.3	-2.5	-2.9
	1973	-0.2	1.4	-0.6	-0.4	-0.2	-1.2	-0.6
	1978	0.2	3.9	-4.7*	0.3	0.2	-4.2	0.5
	1969–78	0.6	1.1	-5.1	2.9	0.5	-1.7	3.4
Central	1969	-0.9	-5.3*	7.8*	-1.6	-0.1	6.2*	-1.7
	1973	-0.4	-2.4	2.3	0.8	-0.2*	2.8	0.5
	1978	-0.5	0.8	2.7	-2.6*	-0.3	-0.3	-3.0*
	1969–78	0.4	0.1	-5.1	-1.1	-0.2	-6.4*	-1.3
Northeast	1969	0.0	2.1	-7.2*	4.9*	0.2	-2.1	5.1*
	1973	0.1	-2.9	2.7	-0.4	0.5*	2.9	0.2
	1978	-0.1	-6.2*	3.8	1.9	0.6	6.3*	2.4*
	1969–78	-0.1	-8.3*	11.0*	-3.0	0.4	8.4*	-2.6
Sex								
Male	1969	0.1	9.2*	-6.7*	-2.4*	-0.3	-9.4*	-2.7*
	1973	0.3	6.7*	-5.2*	-1.8*	0.0	-7.0*	-1.8*
	1978	0.5	5.6*	-3.1*	-2.6*	-0.4*	-6.1*	-3.0*
	1969–78	0.3	-3.6*	3.5*	-0.1	-0.1	3.3*	-0.2

TABLE C-1 — *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Little or No Feelings 1	Minimal Feelings 2	Expressed Feelings 3	Elaborated Feelings 4	Marginal or Better 2,3&4	Competent or Better 3&4
Female	1969	-0.1	-8.3*	6.0*	2.2*	0.2	8.4*	2.4*
	1973	-0.3	-6.8*	5.2*	1.8*	0.0	7.1*	1.8*
	1978	-0.5	-5.7*	3.2*	2.6*	0.4*	6.2*	3.0*
	1969–78	-0.4	2.6	-2.8	0.4	0.1	-2.2	0.6
Race								
White	1969	-1.2	-2.7*	2.9*	1.0*	0.0	4.0*	1.0*
	1973	-0.5	-3.0*	3.0*	0.4*	0.0	3.5*	0.5*
	1978	-0.1	-1.8*	1.8*	0.1	0.0	1.8*	0.0
	1969–78	1.2	1.0	-1.1	-1.0*	0.0	-2.1	-1.0*
Black	1969	2.4	15.9*	-12.3*	-5.2*	-0.9*	-18.3*	-6.1*
	1973	0.2	12.3*	-10.3*	-2.0*	-0.2*	-12.5*	-2.2*
	1978	0.5	4.6	-3.6	-1.8	0.3	-5.1	-1.5
	1969–78	-1.9	-11.3*	8.7*	3.4*	1.2*	13.3*	4.6*
Parental education								
Not grad. high school	1969	3.2	5.3	-2.4	-5.4*	-0.7*	-8.5*	-6.1*
	1973	-0.2	3.2	-1.2	-1.6*	-0.1	-2.9	-1.8*
	1978	0.1	6.8	-3.9	-2.5*	-0.5*	-6.8	-2.9*
	1969–78	-3.1	1.5	-1.5	2.9	0.3	1.7	3.2
Grad. high school	1969	0.3	1.2	-0.6	-0.5	-0.3	-1.5	-0.8
	1973	-0.3	-0.6	1.1	-0.1	-0.1	1.0	-0.1
	1978	-0.2	0.8	0.6	-1.2	-0.1	-0.7	-1.2
	1969–78	-0.5	-0.3	1.2	-0.7	0.3	0.8	-0.4
Post high school	1969	-1.0	-4.0*	3.0*	1.6	0.5*	5.1*	2.1*
	1973	-0.6	-4.0*	3.1*	1.3*	0.2	4.6*	1.5*
	1978	0.2	-2.9*	0.4	2.2*	0.2	2.7*	2.4*
	1969–78	1.2	1.2	-2.6	0.6	-0.3	-2.4	0.2

TABLE C-1 — *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Little or No Feelings 1	Minimal Feelings 2	Expressed Feelings 3	Elaborated Feelings 4	Marginal or Better 2,3&4	Competen or Better 3&4
Type of community#								
Disadvantaged urban	1969	8.4*	10.3*	-13.6*	-4.2*	-0.9*	-18.7*	-5.1*
	1973	0.7	7.2	-4.7	-3.2*	0.0	-7.9	-3.2*
	1978	0.8	18.6	-16.6	-2.4	-0.5*	-19.5	-2.9
	1969–78	-7.5*	8.3	-3.0	1.8	0.4	-0.7	2.2
Rural	1969	4.9	6.6	-5.2	-5.4*	-0.9*	-11.5	-6.3*
	1973	-0.5	-1.9	2.7	0.0	-0.2*	2.5	-0.3
	1978	0.3	9.2*	-6.4*	-2.6*	-0.5*	-9.5*	-3.1*
	1969–78	-4.6	2.5	-1.2	2.8	0.4	2.0	2.2
Advantaged urban	1969	-1.2	4.1	-5.4	1.8	0.8	-2.8	2.5
	1973	-1.2*	-4.4	6.7*	-1.4	0.4	5.6	-1.0
	1978	-0.2	-8.6*	3.3	5.0*	0.6	8.9*	5.6*
	1969–78	1.0	-12.7	8.7	3.2	-0.1	11.7	3.1
Grade								
7	1969	1.2	11.1*	-5.7*	-5.6*	-0.9*	-12.2*	-6.5*
	1973	2.5	6.4*	-6.9*	-1.8*	-0.2*	-8.9*	-2.0*
	1978	0.1	7.5*	-4.5*	-2.9*	-0.1	-7.5*	-3.0*
	1969–78	-1.1	-3.6	1.2	2.8*	0.8*	4.7	3.5*
8	1969	-1.2	-3.7*	2.9*	1.8*	0.2	4.9*	2.0*
	1973	-1.0	-3.8*	3.9*	0.8*	0.1*	4.8*	0.9*
	1978	0.0	-2.4*	1.4*	0.9*	0.0	2.4*	1.0*
	1969–78	1.2	1.3	-1.5	-0.8	-0.1	-2.5*	-1.0*

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*
∿Percentages may not total due to rounding error.
#These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

TABLE C–2. Group Differences From National Percentages, "Rainy Day" Exercise Cohesion Scores, 1969, 1973, 1978∿

	Year	Nonrateable	No Cohesion	Attempts at Cohesion	Cohesion	Coherence	Competent or Better
		0	1	2	3	4	3&4
Nation (%)	1969	1.6	15.6	54.0	26.0	2.7	28.7
	1973	1.2	14.8	65.1	17.6	1.2	18.8
	1978	0.5	16.4	62.6	18.7	1.7	20.5
	1969–78	-1.1*	0.7	8.6*	-7.2*	-1.0	-8.2*
Region							
Southeast	1969	1.7	1.3	0.2	-4.6	1.4	-3.2
	1973	0.7	0.8	2.1	-3.5*	-0.1	-3.6*
	1978	0.3	-0.4	2.6	-1.9	-0.6	-2.5
	1969–78	-1.4	-1.7	2.4	2.7	-1.9	0.7
West	1969	-0.4	1.6	6.9*	-6.3*	-1.8*	-8.1*
	1973	-0.2	-3.4*	3.1	0.1	0.3	0.4
	1978	0.2	-1.4	0.7	0.7	-0.3	0.4
	1969–78	0.6	-3.0	-6.1*	6.9*	1.5	8.5*
Central	1969	-0.9*	-3.2*	-2.9	7.2*	-0.3	7.0*
	1973	-0.4	-0.2	0.9	0.1	-0.4	-0.3
	1978	-0.5*	4.8*	-1.6	-1.6	-1.0*	-2.7
	1969–78	0.4	8.1*	1.2	-8.9*	-0.8	-9.7*
Northeast	1969	0.0	1.2	-3.1	0.9	0.9	1.8
	1973	0.1	2.5	-5.5*	2.6	0.4	3.0
	1978	-0.1	-3.0	-1.6	2.8*	1.9*	4.7*
	1969–78	-0.1	-4.2	1.4	1.9	1.0	2.9
Sex							
Male	1969	0.1	4.6*	-3.3*	-0.7	-0.8	-1.5
	1973	0.3	4.3*	-3.9*	-0.5	-0.2	-0.7
	1978	0.5	5.2*	-3.8*	-0.6	-1.3*	-1.8
	1969–78	0.3	0.5	-0.5	0.1	-0.5	-0.4

TABLE C-2 – *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable	No Cohesion	Attempts at Cohesion	Cohesion	Coherence	Competent or Better
		0	1	2	3	4	3&4
Female	1969	-0.1	-4.0*	2.6*	0.7	0.7	1.4
	1973	-0.3	-4.3*	3.9*	0.5	0.2	0.7
	1978	-0.5	-5.2*	3.8*	0.6	1.3*	1.9
	1969–78	-0.4	-1.2	1.2	-0.2	0.6	0.4
Race							
White	1969	-1.2*	-1.2*	0.4	2.0*	0.0	2.0*
	1973	-0.5*	-1.3*	0.9	0.8*	0.1	0.9*
	1978	-0.1	0.7	-0.7	-0.2	0.2*	0.1
	1969–78	1.2*	1.9*	-1.1	-2.2*	0.2	-1.9*
Black	1969	2.4*	6.4*	-1.3	-7.3*	-0.2	-7.5*
	1973	0.2	8.0*	-3.9	-3.6	-0.6	-4.2*
	1978	0.5	-1.0	2.7	-1.6	-0.5	-2.2
	1969–78	-1.9	-7.4*	4.0	5.6	-0.3	5.3
Parental education							
Not grad. high school	1969	3.2	3.8	2.1	-8.2*	-0.9	-9.1*
	1973	-0.2	2.3	0.7	-2.6	-0.3	-2.9
	1978	0.1	2.5	2.9	-3.8*	-1.7*	-5.5*
	1969–78	-3.1	-1.3	0.8	4.4	-0.8	3.6
Grad. high school	1969	0.3	1.4	-1.7	0.7	-0.7	0.0
	1973	-0.3	-0.9	0.9	0.9	-0.6	0.3
	1978	-0.2	-0.1	1.0	-0.4	-0.3	-0.7
	1969–78	-0.5	-1.5	2.7	-1.1	0.4	-0.7
Post high school	1969	-1.0*	-3.0*	0.4	2.7*	1.0*	3.6*
	1973	-0.6	-2.9*	0.8	1.9	0.8*	2.7*
	1978	0.2	-1.7	-1.2	2.1*	0.7*	2.8*
	1969–78	1.2*	1.2	-1.6	-0.6	-0.3	-0.8

TABLE C-2 — *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable	No Cohesion	Attempts at Cohesion	Cohesion	Coherence	Competent or Better
		0	1	2	3	4	3&4
Type of community#							
Disadvantaged urban	1969	8.4*	4.5	-2.9	-7.2*	2.7*	-9.9*
	1973	0.7	2.4	-5.1	2.2	-0.3	2.0
	1978	0.8	9.0	-5.5	-2.6	-1.7*	-4.3
	1969–78	-7.5*	4.6	-2.6	4.6	1.0	5.6
Rural	1969	4.9	6.3	-1.6	-7.9	1.6	-9.5*
	1973	-0.5	1.0	-0.1	0.5	-0.9*	-0.3
	1978	0.3	4.7	0.6	-4.4	-1.2*	-5.6
	1969–78	-4.6*	-1.6	2.2	3.6	0.4	4.0
Advantaged urban	1969	-1.2	-0.3	5.2	-5.2	1.7	-3.6
	1973	-1.2*	0.6	2.5	-2.2	0.4	-1.8
	1978	-0.2	-4.7	-4.3	6.7*	2.6	9.3*
	1969–78	1.0	-4.4	-9.4	11.9*	0.9	12.8*
Grade							
7	1969	1.2	7.6*	-1.1	-6.3*	-1.4*	-7.6*
	1973	2.5*	0.9	0.2	-3.2*	-0.4	-3.6*
	1978	0.1	7.7*	-1.0	-5.3*	-0.8	-6.1*
	1969–78	-1.1	0.1	-0.5	0.9	0.5	1.5
8	1969	-1.2*	-2.6*	1.1	2.5*	0.3	2.8*
	1973	-1.0*	-0.6	0.6	0.8	0.2	1.0
	1978	0.0	-2.9*	0.8	1.8*	0.3	2.1*
	1969–78	1.2*	-0.2	-0.3	-0.7	0.0	-0.7

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*

~ Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

#These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

TABLE C–3. Group Differences From National Percentages, "Loss" Exercise Primary Trait Scores, 1973, 1978~

	Year	Nonrateable	Little Value/ Feeling	Some Value/ Feeling	Clear Value/ Feeling	Elaborated Both	Marginal or Better	Competent or Better
		0	1	2	3	4	2,3&4	3&4
Nation (%)	1973	2.2	42.0	36.1	18.5	1.2	55.8	19.7
	1978	1.9	39.6	38.6	18.4	1.4	58.4	19.8
	1973–78	-0.2	-2.4	2.5	-0.1	0.2	2.6	0.1
Region								
Southeast	1973	2.6*	-0.1	-2.7	0.2	0.1	-2.5	0.3
	1978	0.0	-5.2*	0.9	4.5*	-0.2	5.2*	4.3
	1973–78	-2.6*	-5.1	3.7	4.3	-0.3	7.7*	4.0
West	1973	-0.6	-0.5	-2.8	4.0	-0.1	1.1	3.9
	1978	0.8	6.7*	-2.9*	-4.2*	-0.4	-7.6*	-4.7*
	1973–78	1.4	7.3*	-0.1	-8.2*	-0.4	-8.7*	-8.6*
Central	1973	-1.2*	-0.5	-1.0	2.7	0.0	1.7	2.7
	1978	-0.7	1.5	-1.3	0.1	0.4	-0.8	0.5
	1973–78	0.5	2.0	-0.3	-2.6	0.4	-2.5	-2.2
Northeast	1973	-0.3	1.1	5.9*	-6.8*	0.0	-0.8	-6.8*
	1978	0.0	-3.6	3.7	-0.3	0.2	3.6	-0.1
	1973–78	0.2	-4.7	-2.2	6.4*	0.2	4.5	6.7*
Sex								
Male	1973	0.9*	8.5*	-1.4	-7.2*	-0.8*	-9.4*	-8.0*
	1978	0.7*	9.4*	-2.5*	-6.8*	-0.8*	-10.1*	-7.6*
	1973–78	-0.2	0.9	-1.1	0.4	0.0	-0.6	0.4
Female	1973	-0.9*	-8.3*	1.4	7.0*	0.8*	9.2*	7.8*
	1978	-0.7	-9.8*	2.5*	7.0*	0.9*	10.4*	7.9*
	1973–78	0.2	-1.4	1.2	0.0	0.1	1.2	0.0
Race								
White	1973	-0.5*	-1.7*	1.3*	0.8	0.1	2.2*	0.9
	1978	-0.5*	-1.2*	0.6	0.7	0.3*	1.6*	1.0*
	1973–78	0.0	0.5	-0.7	-0.1	0.2	-0.5	0.1

TABLE C-3 — *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable	Little Value/ Feeling	Some Value/ Feeling	Clear Value/ Feeling	Elaborated Both	Marginal or Better	Competer or Better
		0	1	2	3	4	2,3&4	3&4
Black	1973	3.9	10.2*	-8.4*	-5.9*	0.1	-14.2*	-5.8*
	1978	1.6*	5.4*	-5.4*	-0.2	-1.4*	-7.0*	-1.6
	1973–78	-2.3	-4.8	3.0	5.7*	-1.5*	7.2	4.1
Parental education								
Not grad. high school	1973	2.2*	4.3	-3.9	-2.2	-0.5	-6.5*	-2.6
	1978	1.4	1.0	-1.0	-0.9	-0.5	-2.3	-1.3
	1973–78	-0.8	-3.3	2.9	1.3	0.0	4.2	1.3
Grad. high school	1973	-0.7*	1.4	-1.0	0.5	-0.3	-0.7	0.3
	1978	0.0	1.6	-1.9	-0.1	0.4	-1.5	0.4
	1973–78	0.6	0.2	-0.9	-0.6	0.7	-0.8	0.1
Post high school	1973	-0.6	-3.9*	1.0	2.8*	0.7*	4.5*	3.5*
	1978	-1.2*	-2.8*	2.0	1.9	0.1	4.0*	2.0
	1973–78	-0.6	1.1	1.0	-0.9	-0.5	-0.5	-1.5
Type of community#								
Disadvantaged urban	1973	-0.4	5.7	-5.3	-0.2	0.1	-5.4	-0.1
	1978	4.9*	1.3	1.5	-6.7*	-1.0*	-6.2	-7.7*
	1973–78	5.3*	-4.4	6.8	-6.4	-1.2	-0.9	-7.6
Rural	1973	1.1	3.8	-2.6	-1.6	-0.8*	-5.0	-2.4
	1978	1.3	-4.6	-2.0	6.2*	-0.9	3.3	5.3
	1973–78	0.2	-8.4	0.6	7.8	-0.2	8.3	7.7
Advantaged urban	1973	-0.7	-8.6*	-1.8	8.8*	2.3	9.3*	11.1*
	1978	0.5	1.9	-3.0	1.4	-0.8	-2.4	0.5
	1973–78	1.2	10.5*	-1.2	-7.5	-3.1*	-11.7*	-10.6
Grade								
7	1973	1.1	9.4*	-2.8	-6.7*	-0.9*	-10.4*	-7.6*
	1978	0.2	8.4*	-2.9	-5.2*	-0.6	-8.6*	-5.7*
	1973–78	-0.8	-1.0	-0.1	1.6	0.3	1.8	1.9

TABLE C-3 — *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable	Little Value/ Feeling	Some Value/ Feeling	Clear Value/ Feeling	Elaborated Both	Marginal or Better	Competent or Better
		0	1	2	3	4	2,3&4	3&4
8	1973	-0.5	-3.4*	1.1	2.5*	0.3*	4.0*	2.9*
	1978	-0.3	-2.7*	0.9	1.8*	0.2	2.9*	2.1*
	1973–78	0.3	0.7	-0.2	-0.7	-0.1	-1.0	-0.8

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*
∿Percentages may not total due to rounding error.
#These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

TABLE C–4. Group Differences From National Percentages, "Principal Letter" Exercise Primary Trait Scores, 1973, 1978

	Year	Nonrateable	Do Not Define and Defend	Minimal Define and Defend	Define and Defend	Systematic Define and Defend	Marginal or Better	Competent or Better
		0	1	2	3	4	2,3&4	3&4
Nation (%)	1973	2.9	28.0	40.7	25.2	3.2	69.1	28.4
	1978	2.3	33.6	43.7	18.5	1.8	64.0	20.3
	1973–78	-0.5	5.6*	2.9	-6.7*	-1.4*	-5.1*	-8.1*
Region								
Southeast	1973	3.1*	5.9*	-2.4	-5.3*	-1.4*	-9.1*	-6.6*
	1978	0.5	1.7	-1.6	-1.8	1.2*	-2.2	-0.6
	1973–78	-2.6*	-4.2	0.8	3.5	2.6*	6.9*	6.0*
West	1973	-0.8	-3.6	3.4	1.4	-0.5	4.4	1.0
	1978	0.0	1.0	0.4	-1.1	-0.2	-1.0	-1.3
	1973–78	0.8	4.6	-3.1	-2.5	0.2	-5.4	-2.3
Central	1973	-1.1	-1.6	0.5	2.3	-0.1	2.7	2.2
	1978	-1.5*	1.4	1.4	-0.3	-1.0*	0.1	-1.3
	1973–78	-0.4	3.0	0.9	-2.5	-0.9	-2.6	-3.5
Northeast	1973	-1.1	-0.1	-2.2	1.2	2.2*	1.2	3.4
	1978	1.3	-4.2	-0.4	3.1	0.3	2.9	3.4
	1973–78	2.3*	-4.1	1.7	1.9	-1.9*	1.7	0.0
Sex								
Male	1973	1.5*	2.8*	0.1	-3.1*	-1.3*	-4.3*	-4.4*
	1978	1.2*	4.7*	-1.6	-3.3*	-0.9*	-5.8*	-4.2*
	1973–78	-0.3	1.8	-1.7	-0.3	0.4	-1.5	0.1
Female	1973	-1.4*	-2.8*	-0.1	3.1*	1.3*	4.2*	4.3*
	1978	-1.1*	-4.4*	1.5	3.1*	0.8*	5.5*	4.0*
	1973–78	0.4	-1.6	1.6	0.1	-0.4	1.2	-0.3

TABLE C-4 — *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable	Do Not Define and Defend	Minimal Define and Defend	Define and Defend	Systematic Define and Defend	Marginal or Better	Competent or Better
		0	1	2	3	4	2,3&4	3&4
Race								
White	1973	-1.2*	-3.5*	1.4	3.0*	0.4*	4.7*	3.4*
	1978	-1.0*	-3.8*	2.5*	2.1*	0.2*	4.8*	2.3*
	1973–78	0.3	-0.3	1.1	-0.9	-0.2	0.0	-1.1
Black	1973	7.3*	16.9*	-9.9*	-12.2*	-2.2*	-24.2*	-14.4*
	1978	4.4*	18.2*	-12.3*	-9.4*	-1.0*	-22.7*	-10.4*
	1973–78	-2.9	1.4	-2.4	2.8	1.2	1.5	3.9
Parental education								
Not grad. high school	1973	2.2	11.1*	-4.0	-7.3*	-2.0*	-13.3*	-9.3*
	1978	2.4*	12.9*	-7.4*	-6.3*	-1.6*	-15.4*	-8.0*
	1973–78	0.3	1.7	-3.4	0.9	0.4	-2.0	1.3
Grad. high school	1973	0.0	-1.1	2.8	-0.4	-1.2*	1.2	-1.6
	1978	0.3	-1.7	1.5	0.0	-0.1	1.4	-0.1
	1973–78	0.3	-0.6	-1.3	0.4	1.2	0.2	1.5
Post high school	1973	-2.1*	-7.9*	-0.3	7.8*	2.5*	10.0*	10.3*
	1978	-1.9*	-5.4*	3.0*	3.5*	0.8*	7.3*	4.3*
	1973–78	0.2	2.5	3.3	-4.3*	-1.7*	-2.7	-6.0*
Type of community#								
Disadvantaged urban	1973	6.4*	11.7*	-9.6	-6.8	-1.7	-18.1*	-8.5
	1978	5.7*	12.3*	-7.8*	-8.6*	-1.5*	-18.0*	-10.2*
	1973–78	-0.8	0.6	1.8	-1.9	0.2	0.1	-1.7
Rural	1973	-0.7	-1.0	5.0	-3.0	-0.3	1.8	-3.3
	1978	-0.5	2.5	1.8	-3.0	-0.7	1.9	-3.7
	1973–78	0.2	3.5	-3.3	0.0	-0.4	-3.7	-0.4

TABLE C-4 — *Continued.*

	Year	Nonrateable 0	Do Not Define and Defend 1	Minimal Define and Defend 2	Define and Defend 3	Systematic Define and Defend 4	Marginal or Better 2,3&4	Competent or Better 3&4
Advantaged urban	1973	-1.8*	-6.1*	-2.5	5.8*	4.7*	8.0*	10.5*
	1978	-2.3*	-6.6	2.2	5.9*	0.8	9.0*	6.8*
	1973–78	-0.5	-0.5	4.7	0.1	3.8*	1.0	-3.7
Grade								
7	1973	2.5*	6.7*	3.3	-9.9*	-2.6*	-9.2*	-12.5*
	1978	3.8*	9.6*	-2.6	-9.4*	-1.3*	-13.3*	-10.7*
	1973–78	1.3	2.9	-6.0*	0.5	1.3*	-4.1	1.8
8	1973	-1.2*	-3.0*	-0.3	3.6*	0.9*	4.1*	4.4*
	1978	-1.4*	-3.8*	1.2	3.5*	0.5*	5.3*	4.0*
	1973–78	-0.4	-0.8	1.6	0.0	-0.4	1.1	-0.4

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*
~ Percentages may not total due to rounding error.
#These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

TABLE C–5. Group Differences From National Percentages, "Pr[illegible]r Calendar" Exercise Primary Trait Scores, 1978∿

	Nonrateable	Incomplete	No Choice	Successful	Marginal or Better
	0	1	2	3	2&3
Nation (%)	2.5	12.5	5.1	79.9	85.0
Region					
Southeast	0.4	1.8	-1.0	-1.3	-2.4
West	-0.2	-2.5	0.0	2.5	2.6
Central	-0.8*	2.1	0.6	-1.9	-1.3
Northeast	0.4	-1.7	0.3	0.9	1.2
Sex					
Male	1.2*	3.6*	1.1	-5.8*	-4.7*
Female	-1.0*	-3.3*	-1.0	5.4*	4.4*
Race					
White	-0.9*	-2.6*	-0.0	3.6*	3.6*
Black	4.9*	12.3*	0.2	-17.4*	-17.2*
Parental education					
Not grad. high school	0.5	6.7*	-1.9	-5.4*	-7.3*
Grad. high school	0.6	-1.9*	1.3	-0.1	1.2
Post high school	-1.9*	-3.8*	-0.3	6.0*	5.7*
Type of community#					
Disadvantaged urban	3.0	8.5*	-0.1	-11.5*	-11.6*
Rural	-0.1	2.8	1.6	-4.3	-2.7
Advantaged urban	-2.5*	-5.5*	0.3	7.8*	8.1*
Grade					
7	3.0*	9.2*	0.3	-12.5*	-12.2*
8	-1.4*	-3.6*	-0.1	5.1*	5.0*

**Statistically significant at the .05 level.*
∿Percentages may not total due to rounding error.
#These population groups represent about one-third of the sample.

APPENDIX D

ERROR FREQUENCIES FOR GOOD AND POOR PAPERS AND SELECTED GROUPS

The tables in this Appendix display error frequencies for papers defined as good or poor by their primary trait, holistic and cohesion scores (3 and 4 = good, 1 and 2 = poor). In addition, error frequencies appear for males, females, blacks and whites. Sample sizes were too small to permit analysis of error frequencies for other reporting groups. The column of figures under "average number" presents the average number of errors per paper. The column under "average percent" presents the average percentage of errors per paper. When the error is a sentence level error—for example, awkward or agreement—the percentage represents the average percentage of sentences per paper containing that error. When the error is a word level error (for example, spelling), the percentage represents average percentage of misspelled words per paper.

TABLE D-1. Average Frequency and Changes in Average Frequency of Errors in Good and Poor Expressive and Descriptive Papers, Age 13, 1969, 1978†

Expressive ("Rainy Day")

	1969				1978				Change 1969-78			
	Good Papers PT 3&4		Poor Papers PT 1&2		Good Papers PT 3&4		Poor Papers PT 1&2		Good Papers PT 3&4		Poor Papers PT 1&2	
	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %
Sentence fragments	0.2	3.2	0.2	3.6	0.2	2.6	0.2	4.6	-0.0	-0.6	0.0	1.0
Run-on sentences	0.2	2.1	0.2	7.2	0.2	2.6	0.3	8.0	0.0	0.6	0.1	0.8
Awkward sentences	1.8	20.7	1.1	28.4	1.7	20.7	1.0	25.5	-0.1	0.0	-0.0	-3.0
Faulty parallelism	0.4	5.4	0.2	7.6	0.4	4.8	0.2	6.1	-0.0	-0.6	-0.0	-1.5
unclear pronoun reference	0.0	0.2	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	-0.0*	-0.7*
Illogical constructions	0.3	3.6	0.2	4.1	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.5	-0.3*	-3.1*	-0.1*	-3.6*
Other dysfunctional constructions	1.0	11.6	0.7	15.8	1.3	15.7	0.8	18.7	0.2	3.7	0.1	2.8
Capitalization errors	0.2	--	0.3	--	0.3	--	0.4	--	0.0	--	0.1	--
Misspelled words	2.9	2.2	2.3	3.9	1.9	1.4	2.6	3.9	-1.0	-0.8	0.2	-0.0
Word-choice errors	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.1
Sentences with agreement errors	0.2	1.9	0.2	4.8	0.2	2.2	0.2	5.6	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.8
Total punctuation errors	4.6	--	2.9	--	5.6	--	2.9	--	1.0	--	0.0	--
Comma errors	3.3	--	1.9	--	3.6	--	1.7	--	0.3	--	-0.2	--
Endmark errors	0.3	3.5	0.3	10.4	0.4	4.5	0.4	9.3	0.1	1.0	0.0	-1.1
Number of respondents	589				680							

Descriptive ("Describe")

	1969				1978				Change 1969-78			
	Good Papers Holistic 3&4		Poor Papers Holistic 1&2		Good Papers Holistic 3&4		Poor Papers Holistic 1&2		Good Papers Holistic 3&4		Poor Papers Holistic 1&2	
	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %
Sentence fragments	0.4	2.6	0.2	4.7	0.4	3.0	0.3	8.7	0.0	0.4	0.1	4.0
Run-on sentences	0.9	8.7	0.8	20.0	0.8	8.6	1.1	23.7	-0.1	-0.1	0.3*	3.6
Awkward sentences	2.0	16.9	1.4	26.9	1.9	18.3	1.3	28.2	-0.0	1.4	0.1	1.3
Capitalization errors	0.6	--	0.9	--	1.0	--	1.4	--	0.4*	--	0.5*	--
Misspelled words	4.8	2.9	5.3	6.6	5.6	3.7	5.2	6.6	0.7	0.7*	-0.1	-0.1
Word-choice errors	0.8	0.5	1.0	1.1	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.7	-0.1	0.0	-0.3	-0.4*
Sentences with agreement errors	0.9	8.1	1.0	19.6	0.9	7.6	0.8	15.7	0.0	-0.4	-0.2	-3.8
Total punctuation errors	3.8	--	2.5	--	4.0	--	2.8	--	0.2	--	0.1	--
Comma errors	3.1	--	2.1	--	3.1	--	1.7	--	0.0	--	-0.4	--
Endmark errors	0.5	3.3	0.5	11.0	0.5	4.4	0.6	15.0	0.0	0.7	0.1	3.9
Number of respondents	395				536							

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Figures may not total due to rounding error.

TABLE D-2. Average Frequency and Changes in Average Frequency of Errors in Expressive Papers for Good and Poor Levels of Cohesion, Age 13, 1969, 1978+

Expressive ("Rainy Day")

	1969				1978				Change 1969-78			
	Good Papers Cohesion 3&4		Poor Papers Cohesion 1&2		Good Papers Cohesion 3&4		Poor Papers Cohesion 1&2		Good Papers Cohesion 3&4		Poor Papers Cohesion 1&2	
	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %	Avg. #	Avg. %
Sentence fragments	0.2	3.1	0.2	3.7	0.3	4.6	0.2	4.4	0.1	1.6	0.0	0.7
Run-on sentences	0.3	6.2	0.2	6.7	0.3	7.4	0.3	7.8	0.0	1.2	0.1	1.0
Awkward sentences	1.4	23.2	1.1	29.2	1.3	23.4	1.0	25.6	-0.1	0.3	-0.0	-3.6
Faulty parallelism	0.3	6.4	0.3	7.7	0.3	6.7	0.2	5.8	0.0	0.3	-0.1	-1.8
Unclear pronoun reference	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.1	-0.0	0.5	-0.0*	-1.0*
Illogical constructions	0.2	3.9	0.2	4.1	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.5	-0.2*	-3.5*	-0.1*	-3.6*
Other dysfunctional constructions	0.9	12.6	0.6	16.4	1.0	15.6	0.8	19.2	0.1	3.0	0.2*	2.8
Capitalization errors	0.4	--	0.3	--	0.5	--	0.4	--	0.1	--	0.1*	--
Misspelled words	2.8	2.7	2.2	4.0	2.5	2.8	2.5	4.0	-0.4	0.0	0.3	-0.1
Word-choice errors	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Sentences with agreement errors	0.2	4.2	0.2	4.6	0.2	4.4	0.2	5.7	-0.0	0.2	0.0	1.1
Total punctuation errors	4.7	--	2.5	--	4.7	--	2.6	--	0.0	--	0.1	--
Comma errors	3.4	--	1.6	--	3.1	--	1.4	--	-0.3	--	-0.1	--
Endmark errors	0.3	5.2	0.3	11.3	0.4	7.4	0.4	9.5	0.1	2.2	0.0	-1.8
Number of respondents	589				680							

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
+Figures may not total due to rounding error.

TABLE D-3. Average Frequency and Average Changes in Frequency of Errors in Expressive and Descriptive Papers for Selected Groups, Age 13, 1969, 1973, 1978†

	1978		1969-78		1978		1969-78	
	Male	Female	Male Change	Female Change	White	Black	White Change	Black Chang
				Expressive ("Rainy Day")				
Avg. % sentence fragments	5.0	3.8	2.5*	-0.5	4.0	5.1	0.8	1.0
Avg. % run-on sentences	9.2	6.1	-1.1	2.5*	6.6	13.8	1.4	-2.6
Avg. % awkward sentences	27.1	23.2	-8.9*	2.3	23.1	39.2	-1.3	-6.0
Avg. % faulty parallelism	5.3	6.7	-4.6*	1.5	5.9	8.2	-0.2	-7.1
Avg. % unclear pronoun reference	0.4	0.1	-0.9	-0.4*	0.3	0.2	-0.6	-0.8
Avg. % illogical constructions	0.4	0.6	-5.0*	-2.5*	0.5	0.7	-3.3*	-3.9
Avg. % other dysfunctional constructions	21.1	15.8	1.7	3.7*	16.4	30.1	2.7	5.7
Avg. # capitalization errors	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.1	-0.2
Avg. % misspelled words	4.5	3.0	-0.4	0.2	3.6	4.1	0.3	-1.8
Avg. % word-choice errors	0.8	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.7	1.6	0.1	0.1
Avg. % sentences with agreement errors	5.7	5.2	1.4	0.5	3.7	16.9	0.7	1.8
Avg. # total punctuation errors	2.7	3.4	-0.6	0.4	3.0	3.1	-0.0	-0.2
Avg. # comma errors	1.5	2.1	-0.6*	0.0	1.8	1.7	-0.3	-0.2
Avg. # endmark errors	0.4	0.4	-0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.1	-0.0
Number of respondents		680				680		
				Descriptive ("Describe")				
Avg. % sentence fragments	7.3	3.7	4.2*	0.2				
Avg. % run-on sentences	18.5	11.8	6.4*	-0.9				
Avg. % awkward sentences	24.8	20.4	4.4	0.5				
Avg. # capitalization errors	1.3	1.0	0.5*	0.4*				
Avg. % misspelled words	6.1	3.8	0.9	0.7				
Avg. % word-choice errors	0.6	0.5	-0.0	-0.2				
Avg. % sentences with agreement errors	11.7	10.6	0.0	-1.3				
Avg. # total punctuation errors	2.7	4.0	-0.4	0.4				
Avg. # comma errors	1.8	3.1	-0.6	0.0				
Avg. # endmark errors	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.1				
Number of respondents		536						

Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Figures may not total due to rounding error.

APPENDIX E

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE AND GROUP RESPONSES TO BACKGROUND AND ATTITUDE QUESTIONS

Appendix E contains the Writing Background Questionnaire as it was administered to 13-year-olds in 1978. These questions were not asked in the 1969 and 1973 assessments.

Table E-1, which follows the questionnaire, shows the percentages of responses to each question for the nation as well as the differences between national percentages and group percentages.

Table E-2 displays the differences between national percentages and the percentages of responses given by those writing poor papers (rated 1 and 2) and good papers (rated 3 and 4) for the "Rainy Day," "Loss," "Principal Letter" and "Poster Calendar" exercises.

It should be noted that for both Tables E-1 and E-2, the "I haven't written any papers" responses (1% to 3%) have been combined with the "Never" responses. Also, summaries for encouragement of prewriting activities, teacher feedback and the writing process are based on both "Usually" and "Sometimes" responses. Therefore, for example on Table E-1, the national percentage of 52 shown after "Encouraged prewrite notes or outlines or both" indicates the percentage responding "Usually" or "Sometimes" to either or both questions 3 and 4. "Either notes/outlines" indicates the percentage (35.6) that responded "Usually" or "Sometimes" to either question 3 or question 4. The percentage responding "Usually" or "Sometimes" to both questions (16.4) is found on the next line.

Table E-3 shows the national percentages of responses to a variety of questions about attitudes toward writing. The questionnaire was adapted from a questionnaire, "How I Feel About Writing," developed by Richard M. Bossone and Lynn Quitman Troyka, The City University of New York.

National Assessment Writing
Background Questionnaire, Age 13

1. How many reports and essays have you written during the last six weeks as part of any school assignment? _____

2. In the general English, literature or grammar classes you have taken during the past two years, about what part of the class time was spent on instruction in how to write reports and essays?

   - ⬭ None of the time
   - ⬭ Little of the time
   - ⬭ About one-third of the time
   - ⬭ About one-half of the time
   - ⬭ Most of the time

3. Are you encouraged to jot down ideas and make notes about the topic of your paper before you write it?

   Usually ⬭ Sometimes ⬭ Never ⬭ I haven't written any papers. ⬭

4. Are you encouraged to make outlines of your papers before you write them?

   Usually ⬭ Sometimes ⬭ Never ⬭ I haven't written any papers. ⬭

5. Do you write a paper more than once before you turn it in to your teachers?

   Usually ⬭ Sometimes ⬭ Never ⬭ I haven't written any papers. ⬭

6. When your papers are returned, do they have written suggestions on how to improve your writing?

Usually ⬭ Sometimes ⬭ Never ⬭ I haven't written any papers. ⬭

7. When your papers are returned, do your teachers discuss them with you?

Usually ⬭ Sometimes ⬭ Never ⬭ I haven't written any papers. ⬭

8. After your papers are returned, do you work on the paper again to improve it?

Usually ⬭ Sometimes ⬭ Never ⬭ I haven't written any papers. ⬭

9. Do you enjoy working on writing assignments?

Usually ⬭ Sometimes ⬭ Never ⬭ I haven't written any papers. ⬭

TABLE E-1. Responses to Background Questions, National Percentages and Differences for Groups, Age 13, 1973, 1978

	Nation	Region				Sex	
		SE	W	C	NE	M	F
1. Reports written last 6 weeks as part any school assignment?							
0	16.4	1.8	-1.9	0.9	-0.9	1.3*	-1.
1	16.4	3.4*	-1.5	-0.3	-1.4	-0.4	0.
2	17.1	1.1	-0.7	0.6	-0.9	-0.6	0.
3	12.9	-1.2	0.1	0.3	0.7	-0.4	0.
4	8.6	-0.7	-0.2	0.2	0.7	-0.7	0.
5-10	17.2	-4.4*	2.3	-0.4	2.3	-1.1	1.
More than 10	3.6	-0.7	0.5	-0.2	0.4	0.3	-0.
2. Time spent English class on writing instruction?							
None	8.8	2.1	-1.1	-0.7	-0.2	1.0	-1.
Little	35.3	1.1	-1.3	0.1	0.2	1.5	-1.
1/3	31.4	-2.4	1.6	0.3	0.3	-0.2	0.
1/2	15.3	-1.0	0.9	1.2	-1.2	-1.9*	1.
Most	8.3	0.4	0.1	-0.7	0.3	-0.5	0.
3. Encouraged jot ideas and make notes before write?							
Usually	40.9	-0.0	-3.0	1.8	1.2	3.7*	3.
Sometimes	47.1	0.4	3.3*	-0.8	-2.9	0.5	-0.
Never	10.9	-0.3	-0.1	-0.6	1.1	2.9*	-2.
4. Encouraged make outlines before write?							
Usually	27.5	0.2	0.4	-1.7	1.1	-2.2*	2.
Sometimes	46.4	-0.4	1.5	0.6	-1.5	-1.2	1.
Never	24.4	0.2	-1.7	1.6	-0.3	3.0*	-2.
Encouraged prewrite notes or outlines or both	52.0	1.0	-2.0	0.4	0.7	-3.5*	3.
Neither notes/outlines	47.0	-0.9	2.3	-0.1	-1.3	3.3*	-3.
Either notes/outlines	35.6	1.7	-1.5	0.7	-0.8	-1.2	1.
Both notes/outlines	16.4	-0.8	-0.5	-0.3	1.6	-2.3*	2.
5. Draft/rewrite before turn in?							
Usually	40.6	-3.7	-1.4	-1.3	-6.2*	-7.3*	7.
Sometimes	45.5	1.3	3.0	0.4	-4.5*	2.0*	-1.
Never	13.9	2.5	-1.6	0.9	-1.8	5.3*	-5.
6. Teacher suggestions on paper?							
Usually	26.3	-4.7*	2.1	-1.5	3.8*	1.7*	-1.
Sometimes	56.1	1.7	0.2	1.2	-3.0	-1.1	1.
Never	17.5	3.0*	-2.3	0.3	-0.9	-0.6	0.

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

TABLE E-1 -- *Continued.*

	Parental Education			Type of Community			Race		Grade	
	NGH	GHS	PHS	DU	R	AU	W	B	7	8
1. Reports written last 6 weeks as part any school assignment?										
0	5.3*	1.9	-4.1*	-0.7	2.6	-4.8*	-0.2	2.2	2.6*	-1.0
1	1.3	1.0	-0.7	-3.1	3.1	-0.0	0.5	-2.2	-0.0	0.1
2	-1.4	0.5	0.8	-3.1	-0.4	-0.2	0.7*	-3.1*	-1.2	0.6
3	-1.8	-0.1	1.2	-1.8	-2.3	1.1	0.5	-2.8*	-1.4	0.7
4	-0.8	-0.5	1.1*	-0.1	-1.1	1.1	0.2	-1.0	-1.6	0.9
5-10	-5.1	-1.7	3.6*	-0.8	-3.4	4.3	0.5	-2.6	-3.5*	1.1
More than 10	-0.5	-0.4	0.5	0.4	-0.4	0.8	-0.0	-0.0	-0.1	0.0
2. Time spent English class on writing instruction?										
None	2.9*	0.2	-2.5*	2.8	2.2	-3.0*	-0.9*	4.5*	3.1*	-1.3
Little	-0.4	1.4	-0.2	-5.0	1.7	0.9	1.6*	-8.2*	-3.2*	1.2
1/3	-7.0*	-1.0	4.5*	-5.6*	-3.7	3.6	1.5*	-8.2*	-3.3*	1.5
1/2	1.1	-0.0	0.0	1.8	-0.8	0.4	-0.6*	3.7*	0.7	-0.4
Most	3.3*	-0.5	-1.7*	5.3*	1.2	-2.3*	-1.5*	7.6*	2.1*	-0.8
3. Encouraged jot ideas and make notes before write?										
Usually	-6.3*	-1.4	5.4*	-7.2*	-2.8	4.7	1.8*	-7.0*	-4.7*	1.6
Sometimes	2.8	1.6	-2.8*	2.3	1.2	-2.0	-0.8	2.5	0.7	-0.2
Never	3.1	-0.1	-2.3*	4.4	1.8	-2.8	-0.8*	3.4*	3.3*	-1.3
4. Encouraged make outlines before write?										
Usually	-4.4*	-1.6	3.6*	-4.6	-2.0	5.9*	0.7	-1.5	-2.4	0.5
Sometimes	0.5	-0.2	0.4	2.0	0.4	-2.5	0.1	-2.6	-0.1	0.1
Never	3.4	1.8	-3.5*	1.4	1.1	-3.2	-0.5*	2.2*	1.4*	-0.6
Encouraged prewrite notes or outlines or both	-6.5*	-1.5	5.5*	-7.0*	-2.6	5.2	1.4*	-4.6*	-3.8*	1.4
Neither notes/outlines	6.2*	1.6	-5.3*	6.4*	2.8	-5.4	-1.2*	3.7	3.2*	-1.1
Either notes/outlines	-2.3	-0.0	2.0*	-2.1	-0.3	-0.1	0.3	-0.6	-0.6	0.2
Both notes/outlines	-4.2*	-1.5	3.6*	-4.8*	-2.3	5.3*	1.1*	-4.0*	-3.2*	1.2
5. Draft/rewrite before turn in?										
Usually	-9.6*	-2.6*	6.5*	-8.9*	-5.7	7.6*	2.3*	-10.5*	-7.5*	2.4
Sometimes	2.7	1.1	-2.5*	4.5	1.5	-3.3	-1.3*	4.4*	2.7	-0.9
Never	6.9*	1.5	-4.0*	4.4	4.3	-4.3*	-1.0*	6.1*	4.7*	-1.1
6. Teacher suggestions on paper?										
Usually	-6.3*	-2.5*	4.3*	-2.2	-4.3	5.9*	0.9*	-5.1*	-4.6*	1.4
Sometimes	-0.4	1.0	-0.7	-1.6	0.3	-1.0	0.4	-2.6	0.8	-0.6
Never	6.7*	1.5	-3.5*	3.9	4.0	-4.9*	-1.3*	7.6*	3.8*	-1.1

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

TABLE E-1 -- *Continued.*

	Nation	Region				Sex	
		SE	W	C	NE	M	F
7. Teacher discuss papers?							
Usually	31.2	3.6	-5.5*	1.5	0.3	-2.1*	1.9*
Sometimes	52.6	-1.7	2.7	-1.0	0.1	-0.2	0.2
Never	16.2	-1.8	2.7*	-0.4	-0.4	2.3*	-2.1*
Teacher feedback suggestions, discussions or both	47.5	0.2	-3.2	0.1	2.7	0.1	-0.1
Neither suggest/discuss	52.4	-0.2	3.2	-0.1	-2.7	-0.1	0.1
Either suggest/discuss	37.3	1.7	-2.9*	0.1	1.1	0.5	-0.5
Both suggest/discuss	10.2	-1.5	-0.3	0.0	1.6	-0.4	0.4
8. Improve returned papers?							
Usually	13.7	1.8	-0.1	-1.4	-0.1	-0.6	0.5
Sometimes	50.5	3.2	1.4	0.5	-4.9*	-1.4	1.3
Never	35.7	-4.9*	-1.3	0.9	5.0*	1.9*	-1.8*
9. Enjoy working on writing?							
Usually	20.4	2.1	-0.9	-0.1	-1.0	-4.4*	4.0*
Sometimes	53.6	1.4	1.6	0.0	-2.8	-3.6*	3.2*
Never	26.1	-3.6*	-0.6	0.1	3.8*	8.0*	-7.2*
Summary process: prewrite, draft, feedback, improve							
None	17.0	-0.8	2.5	-0.2	-1.5	3.4*	-3.1*
At least 1	83.0	0.8	-2.5	0.2	1.5	-3.4*	3.1*
At least 2	51.4	-0.0	-3.5	-0.9	4.2*	-4.5*	4.1*
At least 3	19.8	-0.9	-1.3	-0.9	2.9	-3.1*	2.8*
All 4	3.3	-0.1	-0.5	-0.5	1.0	-0.6	0.5
Number of respondents	29,430						

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

TABLE E-1 -- *Continued.*

	Parental Education			Type of Community			Race		Grade	
	NGH	GHS	PHS	DU	R	AU	W	B	7	8
7. Teacher discuss papers?										
Usually	2.4	0.4	-0.4	-0.6	6.2*	-5.2*	-0.5	7.1*	0.7	-0.2
Sometimes	-2.4	0.1	0.3	-1.7	-3.5	4.3	0.2	-3.2	-2.1	0.6
Never	0.0	-0.5	0.2	1.1	-2.6	0.9	0.3	-3.9*	1.3	-0.4
Teacher feedback suggestions, discussions or both	-1.7	-0.8	1.9*	-0.4	2.0	-0.0	0.1	3.2	-2.1	0.5
Neither suggest/discuss	1.7	0.8	-1.9*	0.4	-2.0	0.0	-0.1	-3.2	2.1	-0.5
Either suggest/discuss	0.6	0.5	-0.0	0.8	2.2	-0.5	-0.3	4.3*	-0.1	-0.1
Both suggest/discuss	-2.3	-1.3	1.9*	-1.2	-0.1	0.4	0.3	-1.2	-2.0*	0.6
8. Improve returned papers?										
Usually	0.6	0.7	-1.4*	6.3*	0.9	0.2	-1.3*	8.5*	3.4*	-1.0
Sometimes	2.6	-0.4	-0.1	-1.6	5.0	-3.4	-0.6	3.7	2.3	-0.7
Never	-3.2	-0.3	1.6*	-4.6	-5.9*	3.2	1.9*	-12.2*	-5.7*	1.8
9. Enjoy working on writing?										
Usually	1.9	-2.2*	1.8*	5.1	2.5	-2.1	-0.6	5.4*	0.2	-0.1
Sometimes	-3.1	0.2	0.2	2.7	-1.2	1.9	-0.7	2.2	-1.9	0.5
Never	1.1	1.9	-2.0*	-7.9*	-1.2	0.2	1.3*	-7.7*	1.6	-0.4
Summary process: prewrite, draft, feedback, improve										
None	4.1	1.3	-3.4*	4.0	1.0	-2.6	-0.5	0.6	2.9*	-0.8
At least 1	-4.1	-1.3	3.4*	-4.0	-1.0	2.6	0.5	-0.6	-2.9*	0.8
At least 2	-7.1*	-2.2	4.9*	-3.3	-1.7	4.7	0.8*	-1.0	-4.1*	1.1
At least 3	-5.4*	-1.7	3.3*	-1.5	-2.3	3.3	0.5	-0.8	-2.4	0.6
All 4	-0.5	0.0	0.3	-0.5	-0.5	1.5	0.1	0.3	-0.3	0.1

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

TABLE E-2. Responses to Background Questions, Differences for Poor and Good Writers, Age 13, 1978

	Nation	"Rainy Day" -- Expressive				"Loss" -- Expressive	
		Primary Trait		Cohesion		Primary Trait	
		Poor Papers PT 1&2	Good Papers PT 3&4	Poor Papers Coh. 1&2	Good Papers Coh. 3&4	Poor Papers PT 1&2	Good Papers PT 3&4
1. Reports written last 6 weeks as part any school assignment?							
None	16.4	3.1*	-3.1*	4.7*	-4.7*	2.7	-3.7*
1	16.4	-0.3	0.5	-1.1	1.4	2.7	-1.5
2-4	38.6	-0.8	0.9	-2.0	2.1	-1.3	1.9
5-10	17.2	-3.3*	3.7*	-2.3	2.6	-4.1	5.8*
More than 10	11.4	2.3	-1.7	1.1	-0.6	-0.9	2.7
2. Time spent English class on writing instruction?							
None -- little	44.0	1.8*	-2.1*	2.7*	-3.0*	3.2*	-3.3*
1/3	31.4	-1.2	1.2	-4.5*	4.5*	-3.1	3.2*
1/2 -- most	23.6	-1.9	2.4*	0.3	0.1	-1.0	1.8
3&4. Encouraged prewrite: notes or outlines or both							
Yes	52.0	-0.4*	0.4*	-0.9*	0.9*	-0.5*	0.7*
Not yes	48.0	4.2*	-4.4*	9.2*	-9.4*	5.3	-6.9*
5. Draft/rewrite before turn in?							
Usually	40.6	-2.7*	2.7*	-3.6*	3.6*	-2.6*	3.9*
Sometimes	45.5	1.5*	-0.9	1.8	-1.3	0.2	-0.3
Never	13.9	2.3	-3.2*	3.4	-4.3	6.5*	-8.0*
6. Teacher suggestion on paper?							
Usually	26.3	-1.4	1.8	-0.1	0.4	0.4	0.3
Sometimes	56.1	-0.9	0.9	-3.1*	3.1*	-1.1	1.6
Never	17.5	2.5*	-1.9	5.7*	-5.2*	-0.4	-0.2
7. Teacher discuss papers?							
Usually	31.2	-2.1*	2.5*	-2.3	2.7	-4.0*	4.1*
Sometimes	52.6	-0.3	0.6	-0.6	0.9	0.1	0.9
Never	16.2	1.1	-2.5*	0.5	-1.9	1.4	-2.4
Teacher feedback -- at least suggest or discuss							
Yes	47.5	-0.8*	0.9*	-1.0*	1.1*	-0.8*	1.3*
Not yes	52.5	4.0*	-4.7*	4.9*	-5.6*	4.6*	-7.1*
8. Improve returned papers?							
Usually	13.7	-4.2*	4.3*	-3.1	3.2	1.9	-0.7
Sometimes	50.5	-1.1	1.7*	-0.4	0.9	-2.2*	2.9*
Never	35.7	0.8	-1.4	-1.3	0.7	0.6	-0.9
Number of respondents†	29,430			2,804			2,775

Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Percentages for the nation, presented to provide context, are based on the entire number of respondents participating in the 1978 writing assessment.
Percentages for exercises are based on the sample responding to each task.
~Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

TABLE E-2 -- *Continued.*

	"Principal Letter" -- Persuasive Primary Trait		"Poster Calendar" -- Explanatory Primary Trait	
	Poor Papers PT 1&2	Good Papers PT 3&4	Poor Papers PT 1&2	Good Papers PT 3&4
1. Reports written last 6 weeks as part any school assignment?				
None	5.4*	-6.9*	5.6*	-5.6*
1	2.0	-0.2	-1.9	2.9
2-4	-1.3	2.6*	-4.0*	5.1*
5-10	-3.6	5.0*	-3.2	2.9
More than 10	-1.7	2.1	-0.1	2.2
2. Time spent English class on writing instruction?				
None -- little	-0.3	0.2	-0.6	0.9
1/3	-0.8	2.1	-2.3*	2.8*
1/2 -- most	3.0	-2.5	0.4	-0.3
3&4. Encouraged prewrite: notes or outlines or both				
Yes	-0.3	1.1*	-2.2*	2.5*
Not yes	2.2	-7.0*	15.3*	-17.2*
5. Draft/rewrite before turn in?				
Usually	-6.5*	7.8*	-6.1*	7.2*
Sometimes	2.7*	-1.6	-1.7	2.3*
Never	7.9*	-10.1*	13.9*	-15.9*
6. Teacher suggestion on paper?				
Usually	-4.6*	4.8*	-1.4	1.8
Sometimes	-0.0	0.9	-3.3*	3.9*
Never	3.6*	-2.5	2.1	-2.4
7. Teacher discuss papers?				
Usually	-3.0	4.9*	-2.7	3.5*
Sometimes	-0.2	1.3	-3.7*	4.3*
Never	1.9	-4.2	6.0	-6.4*
Teacher feedback -- at least suggest or discuss				
Yes	-0.7	1.5*	-2.6*	2.9*
Not yes	3.3	-7.0*	12.2*	-13.9*
8. Improve returned papers?				
Usually	1.5	-1.2	4.3	-5.3
Sometimes	-3.1*	4.2*	-4.5*	5.2*
Never	-0.6	1.5	-2.4	3.2*
Number of respondents†	2,793		2,776	

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.
†Percentages for the nation, presented to provide context, are based on the entire number of respondents participating in the 1978 writing assessment. Percentages for exercises are based on the sample responding to each task.
~Percentages may not total due to rounding error.

TABLE E-3. National Percentages of Responses to Attitude Questions About Writing, Age 13, 1978

On this and on the next page are statements about writing. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by filling in the oval under the appropriate response. While some of the statements may seem repetitious, take your time and try to be as honest as possible.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A.	I like to write down my ideas.	12.9	44.3	21.8	16.2	4.7
		57.2			20.9	
B.	I am no good at writing.	7.5	16.8	21.7	37.8	15.9
		24.4			53.7	
C.	Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.	6.3	11.9	16.3	39.9	25.3
		18.3			65.1	
D.	People seem to enjoy what I write.	6.5	21.1	47.5	15.5	9.3
		27.6			24.8	
E.	I expect to do poorly in composition classes before I take them.	4.7	12.4	20.8	41.1	20.7
		17.1			61.9	
F.	I look forward to writing down my ideas.	10.3	33.6	22.5	23.7	9.7
		43.9			33.5	

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
G.	I write for other reasons besides school.	24.1	52.1	6.3	13.3	3.8
		76.3			17.2	
H.	When I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly.	3.3	9.0	24.4	43.9	18.7
		12.3			62.6	
I.	I enjoy writing.	19.7	39.1	18.2	14.8	7.6
		58.9			22.4	
J	I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.	6.8	22.0	25.9	33.9	10.9
		28.8			44.8	
K.	I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.	14.5	38.2	25.1	16.6	5.3
		52.7			21.9	
L.	I avoid writing.	5.1	9.6	8.9	42.7	33.4
		14.8			76.1	

Percentages may not add to 100% due to nonresponse. Also, percentages for strongly agree and agree or disagree and strongly disagree may not add to total agreement or disagreement due to rounding.

Percentage of Respondents Giving a Positive Response to 12 Attitude Questions

At least 1	97.9%	At least 7	56.8%
At least 2	94.5	At least 3	43.8
At least 3	89.5	At least 9	32.9
At least 4	83.5	At least 10	22.3
At least 5	75.9	At least 11	11.8
At least 6	67.2	All 12	4.8

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